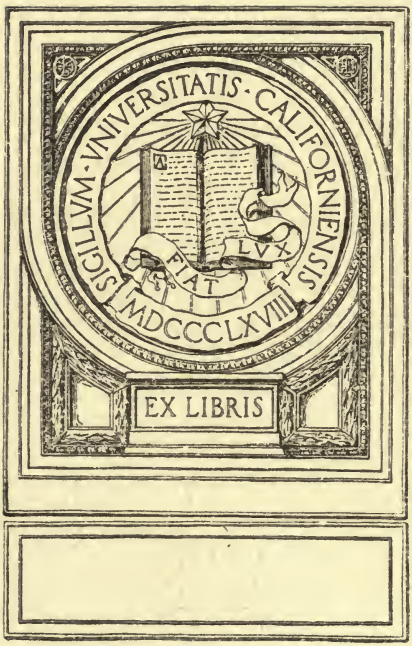
WITH THE TURKS IN THRACE

BY ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT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WITH THE TURKS IN THRACE

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[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

SAVING THE GUNS AFTER THE BATTLE OF LULE BURGAS.

WITH THE TURKS IN THRACE

By ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT

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In Collaboration with SEABURY ASHMEAD-BARTLETT

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PREFACE

This book is intended as a record of those dramatic days my brother and myself passed with the Turkish Army in Thrace during the battle of Lule Burgas and in the subsequent retreat on the lines of Chataldja. I have to acknowledge my great indebtedness to him for the assistance he has given me in writing parts of it, and also in preparing it for publication.

My thanks are also due to the *Daily Telegraph* for allowing me to reproduce articles which originally appeared in its columns.

Since the last chapter was in print the revolt of the Young Turkish party against Kiamil's Government, because of its decision to surrender Adrianople to the Bulgarians—foreshadowed in the last chapter—has actually taken place, and Nazim Pasha, the late Minister of War, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army, has been assassinated.

Whether the Young Turks will endeavour to carry on the war only the future can show, but all the arguments set forth in the concluding chapter against such a course of action still hold good, and a revolution in Constantinople in no wise alters the strategical and financial objections to a renewal of the campaign. Turkey's European Provinces and the fortress of Adrianople are irrevocably lost, and any effort to regain them can only lead to further disasters.

E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT.

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283	16	*for* Erzeroum *read* Erzerum.
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92	1	
274	28	*for* Kuyuk *read* Kuchuk.

Before the Volume was completely passed for press Mr. Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett was forced to return to Constantinople. The Publisher asks for indulgence if the transliterations of Turkish names vary here and there, especially between text and map.

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CHAPTER I

WAITING FOR THE WAR

I HAD just returned from the great French manœuvres in Touraine when the outlook in the Balkans became threatening. There I had followed the operations of five Army Corps, and had seen them handled with machine-like precision, controlled, fed, and concentrated with such ease that war was made to appear a ridiculously easy game. Overhead seventy aeroplanes, assisted by dirigibles, kept the opposing commanders-in-chief fully informed from hour to hour—one might almost say from minute to minute—of every fresh disposition of the enemy's forces, until many eminent critics declared that anything in the nature of grand strategy or of a surprise was eliminated from war for ever, and that the battles of the future would be won by the side which could concentrate the greatest number of troops at a given point and strike home first. "The age," they declared, "of the great general is gone; battles will now be lost or won by the station-masters along the main lines of communication to the front."

There is doubtless a great deal of truth in this. Nevertheless we were reminded that surprises might still occur by an incident on the last day of the first period of the manœuvres, when General Marion, the commander-in-chief

of the Army of the East, together with the whole of his staff, and his Corps Artillery, were captured during the battle fought round Craon by two brigades of Blue Cavalry under the command of General Dubois. This incident showed that mistakes will happen even in the most highly organised and scientific armies, and that there is still scope for the individual brain of a commander to seize the psychological moment and change the fortunes of the day by a brilliant *coup de main*. To outward observation the five French Army Corps in Touraine were manœuvred with consummate ease, yet the machinery which guided and controlled them was of an extremely delicate construction, and, should a hitch have occurred anywhere, the whole complex organisation was liable to be thrown out of gear.

I recall how often it was remarked by critics how hopeless a modern army would be unless its organisation were perfect; how it would flounder about, its units without cohesion and hopelessly intermixed; its supply trains gone astray, and how finally it would blunder up against the enemy's position without having any definite objective to attack, its weight of numbers entirely lost by lack of co-operation. Little did I think at the time, that within a month I would find myself with just such an army, and take part in the most crushing defeat of modern times.

On Monday, September 30th, I returned to London from a visit to the country to find urgent messages from Mr. Harry Lawson to come down to the office of the *Daily Telegraph* immediately. I went there and was instructed to hold myself in readiness to start at a moment's notice for Constantinople to join the Turkish Army in the event of war breaking out in the Balkans. I will not relate in detail here the contradictory rumours of peace and war, which kept the whole civilised world in a ferment of hopes and fears for the next fortnight, before little Montenegro finally

threw down the gauntlet and commenced the Twentieth Century crusade against the Turk without waiting for her allies. On Tuesday, October 1st, I spent most of the day at the *Daily Telegraph* office waiting for the latest news from the Near East and hesitating whether to commence my preparations or to wait just one day longer in case events should take a favourable turn. On Wednesday, October 2nd, I received an express letter telling me to come down to the office without a moment's delay and on arriving there I was informed by Mr. Le Sage, the Managing Editor, that I must start that very night for Constantinople, as the prospects of preserving peace now seemed hopeless.

These days, and I have known many in my time, when one has to rush off to a far distant land at a moment's notice, pass in a whirl of things remembered and things forgotten. You seem to crowd into twelve hours the concentrated efforts of a week, and then, when you are finally seated in the train and hope to obtain a few hours for calm reflection, you invariably find you have forgotten to do many of the most important things you had thought of earlier in the day, and have also left behind numberless articles which you imagine will be of supreme importance to you at the front.

At five that afternoon I happened to meet my brother Seabury, and said to him, "I am off at nine to-night for Constantinople." He replied, "I wish I were going too." I said, "Why don't you come? It may be worth your while; once you are on the spot I am sure I could get you a job with some paper, although you have not had any previous experience, or in any case I am sure to need an assistant and you might be very useful." For some time he hesitated, but finally made up his mind to come with me and rushed off to pack a few clothes. He

would never have hesitated, had he known the dramatic events which were in store for us both before the month had expired.

At nine p.m. on Wednesday, October 2nd, we left Charing Cross for Paris and spent the following day there. We learnt from Cook's that the line to Constantinople *via* Sofia had been taken over by the Bulgarian Military Authorities, and that the last Orient Express had passed through the day before. We had, therefore, to travel out to Constantinople *via* Constanza, in Roumania, passing through Vienna and Bucharest, and from Constanza to take the steamer to Constantinople. We found every seat in the Orient Express booked as far as Vienna, and were obliged to take an intermediate train as far as the Austrian capital.

As we had a few hours to spare in Paris, we went to call on M. Normand, the editor of *The Illustration*, for whose paper I had written an article the year before on the "Massacre in the Oasis" on my return from the Italian campaign in Tripoli. M. Normand, a handsome black-bearded man with a clever, alert, humorous face, received us in his office, which was superbly decorated in the style of Louis Quinze and looked less like the dreaded editorial lair than a lady's boudoir. He greeted us with great politeness saying, "M. Ashmead-Bartlett, je suis enchanté de vous revoir, bien que votre article sur les atrocités Italiennes en Tripolitaine nous ait perdu six cents abonnés en Italie, et qu'on ait même brûlé *l'Illustration* sur les places publiques. Mais, M. Bartlett," the editor went on with a serious air, "il y a encore pire—le Saint Siège a mis *l'Illustration* sur l'Index." He ended up with a magnificent gesture expressive of mingled horror and amusement.

At five o'clock we left Paris for Vienna. As we had no time to complete our packing in a scientific manner, we had

with us in the carriage a miscellaneous collection of bags and packages, including a tent in a canvas bag and a saddle wrapped up in a sack. Our belongings completely filled up a first-class compartment, rendering it impossible for any other would-be passengers to enter. All went well as long as we were in France, the officials being prescient of the *pourboire* which was certain to arise from the chaos around us.

The situation, however, changed for the worse as soon as we crossed the German frontier. A horde of fat but alert-looking officials gathered in the doorway, contemplating with mingled suspicion and horror the amount of our hand baggage, which included a typewriter, a suit-case, a hat-bag, a Gladstone bag, a rug-strap and a dispatch box, as well as the saddle and tent. "Mein Gott, how many passengers are there for all this baggage?" asked one of them. We replied, "Two." "Is such a thing possible?" he faltered. Then, after a few minutes' conversation with his companion, his face lighted up and he said, "Have you the first class?" We realised we were objects of intense suspicion. The flaxen-haired, vicious-looking conductor gazed in anticipated triumph at the disreputable-looking packages containing our tent and saddle. He was sure that such travellers could only have second-class tickets, and when we proved the contrary he was keenly disappointed. Then, after another guttural conversation with his companions, he asked, "Are you Englishmen?" "Yes," we replied. A look of understanding brightened up their heavy Teutonic faces. Later on another conductor came and eyed the tent and saddle with suspicion. "You should not bring meat with you into a first-class compartment," he said. "Meat?" we answered, in astonishment. "Yes," he answered, "have you not got a ham in that sack?"

On Friday, October 4th, we reached Vienna, where we

were obliged to break our journey, as the train for Constanza did not leave until the following evening. We stopped at the Bristol Hotel, and found several well-known war correspondents already there, likewise bent on reaching Constantinople. I was delighted to find amongst others my old friends Lionel James, of *The Times*, and M. H. Donohoe, of the *Daily Chronicle*. It is always pleasant to know you are going to campaign amongst friends, even though you know them to be the keenest of competitors, who will keep you on the *qui vive* from start to finish, unless you wish to find your best endeavours ever anticipated by the *coups* of these highly trained and skilful colleagues.

We spent Saturday seeing the sights of the town, and in the afternoon my brother and myself visited the battlefield of Aspern-Essling on the other side of the Danube. At five o'clock we entered the Orient Express for Constanza. On the train we met Reshid Pasha, who was returning from conducting the peace negotiations with the Italians at Ouchy. Poor Turkey! Here was her representative returning from what proved to be a successful mission of peace, only to find his country on the brink of war with four other nations. He was accompanied by Colonel Aziz, who had been Military Attaché in Washington, and who had also accompanied the British Army during the South African War. He told me he was on his way to join his regiment at Mustafa Pasha, on the Bulgarian Frontier, and that he regarded war as certain.

We reached Constantinople on Monday, October 7th. The last time I had visited this picturesque blot on the face of Europe, was fourteen years before, at the time of the Greco-Turkish war, when Abdul Hamid still reigned supreme, and all one knew of the Young Turks was the sinister fact that from time to time their bodies were found floating in the Bosphorus, being carried slowly by the tide out towards the Sea of Marmora.

I had heard so much of the Young Turks and the miracles they were going to accomplish once the country had obtained a Constitution that I hardly expected to recognise Constantinople, but to find it a city transformed. I found nothing changed except that the dogs had gone, although, by the way, a fresh generation of these noisy pests is already springing up. Constantinople remains to-day the city of many colours and of decay; the city which nature designed to be a paradise on earth and which man has transformed into a cesspool of vice, decay, and blood; a city which from the waters of the Bosphorus looks like a dream of marble hanging on the slopes of purple hills, and which on closer inspection turns out to be a hopeless jumble of tumble-down houses with gangrened and mouldering walls, built along the sides of badly-paved, precipitous streets, down which tired horses glide and stumble, with here and there some beautiful marble mosque rising above the gaudy rubbish-heap of an out-worn faith. The Turks have done nothing constructive to beautify the city since their inruption in 1453. They have merely added minarets to the old Byzantine churches, or erected mosques in garish imitations of the Greek buildings. For the rest, they have allowed the city to fall into hopeless decay.

We were delayed at the Customs House by an official who insisted that our tent in its canvas case was the envelope of a dirigible balloon. It was only by a liberal donation of backsheesh that we convinced him of the innocent nature of our baggage.

We found the wildest rumours floating about the city. Everyone held different opinions and had a different tale to tell on the prospects of peace or war. Some declared war to be absolutely certain and others were equally confident that peace was assured. At the Pera Palace Hotel we found a motley collection of war correspondents of all

nations, who, like vultures, had gathered in anticipation of the horrid feast of death.

In official and diplomatic circles the opinion prevailed that peace was assured because the Turkish Cabinet had agreed to apply the Law of 1880 to Macedonia. This concession, combined with the efforts of the Powers to bring pressure on Bulgaria and Servia to preserve peace, caused a highly optimistic tone to prevail in Constantinople on the day of our arrival, and until we got in touch with the true facts of the position it really seemed as if our journey to the Near East would be in vain. However, on visiting Sir Gerard Lowther I found that he was far from sharing the general optimism and regarded the situation as extremely grave. His views were confirmed and amplified by Count Léon Ostrorog, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in Constantinople, who was always better informed on the true situation than anyone else.

Europe had up to this time quite failed to grasp the true significance of the Balkan League. It had been built up by years of patient endeavour with the proclaimed object of obtaining the freedom of Macedonia, but with the real intention of proclaiming a twentieth century crusade and of driving the Turks once and for all out of Europe. The only hope for Turkey lay in the jealousies of the Great Powers, and especially in the much-vaunted, but now discredited, friendship of Germany, which, the Turkish Government hoped, would postpone the blow until a more favourable season, if it could not permanently prevent it. To this hope Turkey clung, until in the end the demands of the Coalition left no alternative but war.

Immediately on arrival in Constantinople we began to experience the difficulty of getting at the truth of anything. The Press is not allowed to publish any news of importance without official sanction, but nevertheless the most intimate

Cabinet secrets are common property within a few hours. No one seems capable of keeping a secret, and all news filtering from mouth to mouth in the coffee-houses and mosques becomes hopelessly garbled and distorted, with the result that in the course of a few hours a score of people will tell you different stories of events which have obviously originally emanated from the same source.

For two days we wandered around Constantinople endeavouring to get in touch with the true situation, so as to find out whether it was worth while going to all the trouble and expense of making preparations to take the field. On the second day Count Ostrorog invited my brother and myself to lunch, and finally removed all doubts in our minds. Count Ostrorog had all along unhesitatingly preached the certainty of war in his despatches to the *Daily Telegraph*. He was on intimate terms with everyone in the diplomatic and official world; he possesses a sound knowledge of the Turkish character, history and politics, and always had access to the Sublime Porte. He was at one time legal adviser to the Young Turks and to the Committee of "Union and Progress," and has had much practical experience of the difficulties of attempting to graft modern civilisation on to a Mahommedan community without infringing the sacred code of Islam.

At lunch Count Ostrorog told us that there was a rumour that the Montenegrin Minister had asked for his passports and was about to leave Constantinople. In the middle of lunch the Count's secretary, M. Pech, arrived and confirmed the report. The surprise of everyone in Constantinople was intense when it became known that Montenegro, the smallest and weakest State of the Coalition, the "opera bouffe" State of the Balkans, had thrown down the gauntlet and declared war. On hearing this all-important piece of news, I lost no time in visiting the War Office, known in Turkish as the

Seraskerat, in the hope of seeing Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War, as I wished to find out what facilities would be given to war correspondents to carry on their work at the front.

Great excitement prevailed in the streets of Stamboul through which we had to pass on our way to the War Office. Military preparations were being hastily pressed forward. The narrow, filthy, cobbled streets were crowded with Turks, reading the little sheets issued by the Ottoman Agency, announcing the outbreak of war with Montenegro. There were young Turks dressed in the latest European fashion, with little save the red fez to denote that they were children of the Prophet; old men in gaudy turbans and coloured robes sitting cross-legged in front of their tumble-down shops; wild-looking individuals from Turkestan in long smocks embroidered with gorgeous flowers; negroes with their happy, smiling faces, to whom war made apparently not the smallest difference; here and there veiled Turkish ladies in black satin dresses and shoes from the Rue de la Paix; fat Jewesses and crowds of peaceful-looking peasants from Anatolia who had come to the capital out of curiosity, or who were obeying the summons of the mobilisation. Many of them had brought their sheep and their turkeys or their oxen with them, hoping to do a good "deal" before leaving for the front. Sometimes the crowd would be ruthlessly pushed aside to make room for detachments of fully accoutred Turkish infantry marching to the station to entrain for the front.

On reaching the War Office we found large numbers of troops being drilled and equipped in the great courtyard in front of the building, while a band was playing Turkish military airs to stir up the patriotism of numbers of recruits and reservists who were endeavouring to master the intricacies of the Mauser rifle, which large numbers had never seen or handled before. The courtyard in

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

CONSTANTINOPLE.

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front of the Seraskerat was a great centre of attraction for the people of Constantinople, who spent the day gazing in wonder and admiration at the splendidly-equipped battalions as they were in turn marched off to the station to entrain to join the army of Thrace, which was now being formed between Adrianople and Kirk Kilisse. We were unable to see Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War, on this visit, but my brother and I here made the acquaintance for the first time of Colonel Izzet Bey, who was destined to play a very important *rôle* in our lives, as he was placed in charge of all the war correspondents and military attachés. We hoped to learn much valuable information from Izzet, but quickly found that he expected us to keep him informed of what was happening. He started by asking us whether we had heard any news of a declaration of war by Bulgaria, Servia, and Greece. I very soon learned to know also that it was utterly useless to hope for any reliable information from the War Office, as Colonel Izzet did little to assist the correspondents except to invent a daily victory for the Turks. The information which he gave us regarding the movements of troops and the concentration of the various army corps was generally fabulous, and consisted of what the army should have done rather than what it actually did. This mania for dissimulation and for keeping up false pretences when the truth must eventually leak out is a marked characteristic of Turkish officialdom.

CHAPTER II

SCENES IN CONSTANTINOPLE

On the following morning my brother and myself accompanied Count Ostrorog to the Sublime Porte to visit Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha, the Grand Vizier. The Sublime Porte is sublime only in name, being an unpretentious, dilapidated and rather dirty square building, while the paving stones in the courtyard have subsided in many places, allowing the water to accumulate in pools. A number of troops were concentrated in the courtyard to cope with a possible outbreak, as disturbances had been freely threatened unless the Government showed a firm front to the demands of the Balkan States.

We were received on every hand with the greatest courtesy and politeness, the Turk being by instinct the first gentleman in Europe. But, on the other hand, we were kept waiting nearly three hours before the Grand Vizier arrived at his office from his country seat, it being typical of Turkish methods that he should arrive at two o'clock at his office, when Islam was on the verge of one of the greatest crises in its history. We waited in the room of Ghazi Moukhtar's Chef de Cabinet, a handsome and very smartly dressed young Spanish Jew. The room was thronged all the time with an anxious crowd of deputies, journalists and the like. They discussed the situation from a variety of standpoints, all their arguments leading by

devious routes to the certainty of war. Presently an old man, an ex-deputy, came up, and bid Ostrorog farewell, saying that together with his two sons he had volunteered for service in the army and that all three were leaving for the front that afternoon. At length, about two o'clock, the Grand Vizier drove up.

Ghazi Moukhtar, the celebrated defender of Kars in the Russian War of 1878, is a splendid specimen of the old type of Turk, and showed but few traces of his ninety years. On the other hand, it was easy to see that a man of such advanced years must be lacking in that vigour of mind and quickness of decision necessary to cope with the tangled and troubled situation in which the Ottoman Empire was placed. Ghazi Moukhtar has been nicknamed the MacMahon of Anatolia, and this title well describes him. He is a simple, honest soldier, possessing none of the brains or finesse or far-seeing ability so necessary in the statesman who hopes to guide his country successfully through troubled waters. The Ghazi is very plain and blunt in his speech, and did not hesitate freely to express his views before Europeans who could at once make them public. The Ghazi's colleagues in the Ministry knew his proclivities for free speech, which had frequently landed them in trouble before, and finally they had induced him to promise never to grant any further interviews, but on this occasion, having escaped from his chaperons, he quickly forgot his promise and indulged in a torrent of opinions. He spoke French slowly and distinctly, but seemed to have some difficulty in grasping what was said to him.

I asked him what the attitude of the Government would be now it had consented to apply the Law of 1880 to Macedonia. He replied, "Turkey has reached the limit of her concessions in Macedonia, and nothing but war remains unless Bulgaria and Servia consent to demobilise." I told him I had been

with the Italian Army in Tripoli and had been responsible for exposing the massacre in the Oasis. This seemed to please him very much. Then the tactful Count Ostrorog, who always knows how to say the right thing at the right moment, referred to his glorious defence of Kars against the Russians which had earned for him the title of Ghazi, which means, "the man who has defeated Unbelievers," and expressed the hope that he would again take the field in command of the Turkish armies. The old warrior was delighted at this piece of obvious flattery, and the recollection of his former glories coming into his eyes, he replied, "I often think of it and long to be in the saddle at the head of my troops, but I am old and infirm." "But Highness, one could never take you for an old man," the diplomatic Count Ostrorog replied, "you are surely not so old as Fouad Pasha, who commands the cavalry." "Ah, my friend," the old man replied, "I was a marshal when Fouad was only a colonel."

Ghazi Moukhtar has all the charming simplicity of the peasant. His face is full and of a healthy colour; his beard thick and white. Save for a slight palsy and hesitation in his speech, one would never suspect his age.

Afterwards we touched on the question of Montenegro's declaration of war, and he expressed himself as totally mystified by the attitude of the little mountain State in precipitating the struggle. "Why has Montenegro declared war on us, apparently without consulting her allies?" he said. "I always thought that Montenegro worshipped Russia as a god, and that a single word from the Russian Government, which professes to be so sincerely anxious to preserve peace, would have held the Montenegrins in check."

The old warrior made no further comment, but his remarks showed clearly the intense and very natural suspicion with which the pacific efforts of Russia and

Austria were regarded by the Turks. Poor old Ghazi Moukhtar only remained Grand Vizier for a few weeks longer. The defeat of Lule Burgas discredited his Ministry, and he was obliged to resign to make room for Kiamil Pasha, who was supposed to be an Anglophil.

At this time there was ample evidence in Pera and Stamboul of the activity with which preparations for war were being pushed forward. Regiments of Turkish infantry were being constantly marched through the streets to entrain for the front at the Cirkedge railway station in Stamboul. Most of the men were Redifs, and had been hastily called up from all parts of the empire. Physically they could hardly have been bettered. Tall, strong, deep-chested, and accustomed to hardships and to a meagre diet from earliest childhood, they were defenders of which any nation might have been proud. They showed but little trace of enthusiasm, marching through the streets with dull, expressionless faces, more like animals than men.

Reservists were arriving from Anatolia at the rate of seven thousand a day, and were immediately marched off to the various barracks to receive their uniforms and equipment. These peasants were intensely picturesque. They were dressed for the most part in bright-coloured cotton shirts and ragged trousers, with coloured turbans wound round their heads. Many arrived in Constantinople barefooted, and strongly resented having to wear military boots. As they were quite unaccustomed to foot-gear their feet speedily became sore, and two weeks later, during the retreat from Lule Burgas, it was a very common sight to see men deliberately throw away their boots in order to facilitate their escape from the stricken field.

Although the conscription had only called for men between the ages of twenty and forty-five, there were many above and below this age who had volunteered to serve with the army.

The hard lives of the peasantry in Anatolia cause men to age rapidly, and thus a great many of these reservists had an appearance of extreme age and venerability, and looked as if they ought to be on their way to collect old age pensions rather than to shoulder a Mauser rifle. These reservists seemed extremely cheerful and full of fight until they reached the barracks, but the finished article turned out there seemed to lose most of his patriotism and enthusiasm for the war.

I suppose a few nights in crowded quarters with barrack fare, and a few days spent in long hours of drill, carrying heavy packs on the back, caused these simple Anatolians to take a different view of the struggle. Possibly also for the first time the awful state of confusion which prevailed everywhere was brought home to them, and they began to have serious misgivings as to the outcome of the war.

The recruits and reservists, as soon as they arrived in Constantinople, were marched to the barracks. The men formed up in double file or in fours, and, holding each other's hands, marched through Pera and Stamboul to the music of primitive flutes and diminutive violins, played by the shepherds among them, whilst the others chanted monotonous refrains. From time to time the music would stop and the whole group would utter a deep-throated cheer.

In the mosque of St. Sofia we saw numbers of these Redifs, who had obtained an afternoon's leave after receiving their uniforms and kits, gazing in wonder and awe at this miracle of marble and mosaic and at the golden dove above them, before kneeling in silent prayer to Allah. It was an object lesson to watch the sublime faith which these innocent victims of oppression had in the justice of their cause and in the certainty of their victory. How few realised that within three weeks nearly all would be dead or back at the lines of Chataldja, and that St. Sofia would have been turned into a

vast hospital for the wounded or for the countless victims of cholera!

The Turkish Government, having little or no money to spend on the war, adopted the very simple expedient of commandeering anything it might require for the service of the army. Receipts were given for horses and carts, the money to be paid after the war in the event of the property not being returned to its rightful owners. No one had the slightest faith in the ability or even in the intention of the Government to meet its liabilities, and there was a rush of all cab owners or horse dealers in Constantinople to sell their animals to Europeans, before they could be commandeered by the agents of the Government. Thus, excellent horses could be obtained at about half their usual price, the attraction of cash down in the place of a Government receipt proving irresistible.

The veterinary surgeons hired by the Government to pass horses as fit for service made large fortunes in bribes, and many a horse owner saved his animal by a timely gift of a couple of sovereigns to the veterinary surgeon, who would at once pronounce it as lame or permanently unfit for service. I know of one man who made £1000 in this way alone.

The first to be taken were the tram horses which were required for the use of the artillery, after which the cab horses were gradually snatched up. In consequence, only the most wretched old screws were left to drag one about Constantinople, and as the insatiable maw of war gradually made fresh demands, these also were commandeered, and very frequently one would see a two-horse carriage being dragged along by a single animal which would not have fetched two pounds as sausage meat in normal times.

On the way back from the Sublime Porte, where we had visited the Grand Vizier, our carriage was stopped in order that the two fine Arab horses which dragged it might be noted

by the military authorities. This was probably the last drive they ever took through the streets of Pera, as few of the horses survived the hardships of the campaign in the cold table-lands of Thrace. They were too light for the heavy Turkish cavalrymen or for the heavy transport wagons, even if proper care had been taken of them. But in the care of their horses, as in everything else, the Turks showed lamentable negligence. The horses seldom, if ever, received sufficient food, and their saddles fitted so badly and were kept on for such long periods that they developed huge festering sores, until, finally, at the end of their powers of endurance, they dropped by the roadside to die of hunger and exposure.

Toward the end of the mobilisation in Constantinople the city was almost without wheeled transport. Only the horses of the ambassadors and a few old screws remained in the streets. A few days later the Government decided to seize the horses of all foreigners resident in the city, with the exception of those belonging to ambassadors and bankers, the exemption of the latter being delightfully significant of the empty state of the Treasury. We encountered great difficulty in buying horses to take us to the front. Such animals as remained were leading much the same existence as the Huguenots after St. Bartholomew's Eve. They were hidden away in obscure streets, behind locked doors, in stables to which admittance could only be obtained by knocking the requisite number of times. Then the bolt would be stealthily withdrawn a few inches, a head would look out to see if you were a friendly cash-down purchaser or a vile confiscatory soldier, who would not only take the horse in return for a worthless bit of paper, but also the harness and cart and any fodder which happened to be in the stable.

As the days passed and the male population was

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CALIFORNIA

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

NOGI AND ABDULLAH, OUR TWO SADDLE HORSES, WITH HADJI, THE ALBANIAN GROOM.

gradually drafted to the army, Stamboul grew more and more to resemble a city which had been swept by a great pestilence. The shops and booths were almost deserted and the contents were being disposed of by boys in their teens or by old men too worn out for service in the field. None but old men were to be seen in the shadowy bazaars, where beneath vaulted Byzantine arches they sat cross-legged all day before a jumble of carpets from Aleppo, silks from Damascus, gold-work, jewels, silver, and shoddy trifles from Birmingham and Manchester. Almost the entire able-bodied male population had been swept northwards by the tide of war, leaving their homes, their families and their countless petty trades to take care of themselves. Sir Walter Scott's words describe the state of Stamboul, and indeed of every hamlet in Turkey, better than any words of mine can do:—

> "For naught, he said, was in his halls
> But ancient armour on the walls,
> And aged chargers in the stalls,
> And women, priests and grey-haired men,
> The rest were all in Twisel glen."

Throughout the whole of European Turkey and Anatolia the men had been called to the front. Every village, town and hamlet had sent its tale of men. War is an insatiable maw which gathers to its cruel feast whole provinces at a time. The normal life of the nation must be carried on by old men and women and beardless youths, whose turn is likely to come at any moment. The loss in wealth which this represents to a community is far greater than the amount of money consumed by the war. The sacrifices demanded of Turkey in this most fateful winter in her chequered history are horrible to contemplate. The suffering and poverty in many a home in Asia Minor will only be known to the sufferers themselves—who will bear them

without a murmur—and to the bread-winner, if by chance he survive the struggle and return to his native village the richer only in glory and in his hopes of eternal salvation.

From the very day the first shot was fired by Montenegro the Turks began to disseminate false news of purely imaginative victories. They were published broadcast in their local Press and by the Ottoman Agency, an institution which works hand in glove with the Government. I myself, and many of my colleagues who knew little of Turkey or of the Turkish character, were taken in at the start, because we never believed that a reputable Government would adopt such childish measures to conceal its reverses.

Yet officers, including Colonel Izzet, who, I really think, himself believed some of the stories he told us, were instructed to send news to Europe which did not contain a single element of truth. The first night he came to dine with us at the hotel he gave us the news of the fighting on the Montenegrin frontier. "The Montenegrins," he said, "have crossed the Turkish frontier, capturing several villages and massacring the inhabitants without distinction of race or creed, sparing neither old men, women nor children. Afterwards three battalions of Turkish infantry advanced and defeated the Montenegrins, driving them back across the frontier." "But," I asked, "if we telegraph this news, will the censor pass it?" "Yes, he will pass it all right," replied Colonel Izzet. "Will he pass the part about the massacres?" "Yes," came the prompt response, "I can assure you he will pass the massacres." We could hardly restrain our laughter.

The above is typical of the methods of the official Turkish Press Bureau. We were repeatedly officially informed by the Headquarters Staff, as the above example shows, of successes gained by the Turkish troops on the Montenegrin frontier, and were given the names of towns

and villages taken from the enemy. Yet, when the English papers reached Constantinople a few days later, and we read for the first time the Montenegrin reports of the engagements, we found that they claimed the victory and the possession of the same towns and villages, with the not inconsiderable addition of more than three thousand Turkish prisoners. When the war became general we heard equally divergent reports from the Servian, Bulgarian and Greek frontiers, until the task of the wretched war correspondent became hopelessly bewildering as long as he remained in Constantinople. It was not until we started for the front, and could see for ourselves, that the veil fell from our eyes and the naked truth stood revealed in all its dramatic intensity.

The Turks, following the unfortunate precedent of the Turco-Italian War, embarked on a vast campaign of make-believe, in order to throw dust in the eyes of the public, and would in no circumstances admit a reverse until the truth became so obvious that it could no longer be concealed. This is both a foolish and a short-sighted policy. Sooner or later the truth always comes out, and as the Government had systematically announced decisive victories, the ultimate revelations were all the harder for the public to bear. In addition, this campaign of lies effectually alienated the sympathy of most of the correspondents who had arrived in Constanza pronounced Turcophils.

CHAPTER III

THE EFFORTS OF DIPLOMACY

ALTHOUGH the war was certain from the very first, dull-witted, heavy-footed diplomacy went on playing its hollow farce right up to the moment when the first sound of the cannon brought down the fragile edifice of pretence and conceits about the ears of the diplomats like a pack of cards.

On Sunday, October 6th, the Sublime Porte, anticipating that the Powers would bring pressure to bear on Turkey for the enforcement of the reforms in Macedonia, announced that it was prepared to enforce the Law of the Vilayets of 1880, which the Sultan Abdul Hamid had refused to ratify. The news of this became public on Monday, the day we arrived, and in consequence superficial observers imagined that peace would be preserved. But the Turk had been promising reforms in Macedonia for nearly a century without any practical betterment of the lot of that unfortunate province. It was unlikely, therefore, that the Balkan Coalition, which had been preparing for the war to save their co-religionists in Macedonia for more than twenty years, would withdraw at the eleventh hour and declare themselves satisfied with a hollow promise, which had so often been made and so often broken in the past.

On the same day the Powers agreed to M. Poincaré's proposals that they should unite to bring pressure to bear in the Balkan capitals in the interests of peace. This was

done quite seriously three weeks after the Balkan States had begun mobilising with the avowed object of driving Turkey out of Macedonia. Russia and Austria, as the Powers most directly interested, were to make joint demands at Sofia, Belgrade, and Athens, while the Powers were to present a collective Note to the Porte demanding the practical fulfilment of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin. Russia and Austria were to make their demands on Tuesday, October 8th. By a strange coincidence, on the morning of that day, before the Ambassadors had had time to present their Note, Montenegro, the smallest of the Leaguers, declared war on Turkey. Now, Montenegro has always been guided in her actions by Russia, and Russia has provided her with both money and arms. Yet on the very day that Russia was presenting a Note in the interests of peace to the Balkan Allies, little Montenegro declares war.

A general war might surely now have been regarded by European statesmen as inevitable, but still diplomacy continued its policy of pretence, and the next step was the presentation of the Austrian and Russian Notes to the Balkan Allies, a few hours after the news of Montenegro's action had come to hand. The Notes formulated the following demands :—

(1) That the Powers will energetically reprove all measures tending to bring about a rupture of peace.

(2) That, taking as their basis Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin, they, the Powers, will take in hand the realisation of the reforms in the administration of Turkey in Europe, it being understood that the reforms will not infringe the sovereignty of the Sultan or the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

(3) That should war nevertheless break out, the Powers will not permit at the end of the conflict any modification of the territorial *status quo* in European Turkey.

This sounded very virtuous and to the point, and must have soothed the *amour propre* of the statesmen who drew it up. Unfortunately, it was presented three weeks after the mobilisation had begun and when the angry armies were already facing one another on the borders. Also the statesmen of Sofia and Belgrade were sufficiently astute to know that the Powers were far too busy quarrelling amongst themselves to take any effective collective action. Had not Montenegro already crossed the Rubicon and defied the Concert of Europe, which in spite of the frantic efforts of its conductor Poincaré was already playing hopelessly out of tune ?

As a matter of sober fact, although unknown to European statesmen at the time, the Balkan question had passed entirely beyond the powers of diplomacy to influence the issue one way or the other once the mandate had gone forth for the forces of the Coalition to mobilise. All the well-meant efforts of Europe to preserve peace, although outwardly accepted with good grace and fervent thanks by the prospective combatants, who were determined to preserve all the etiquette and outward formula of diplomacy until the first shot was fired, were being secretly laughed at by the military authorities of all five interested parties, who were in entire control of the situation and determined to make war just as soon as their military preparations were complete and at that psychological moment when they could strike with most advantage.

In Europe the idea was generally held, and diplomacy seems to have accepted it as well, that the real issue at stake was the question of Macedonia. This was an entirely erroneous outlook. The Macedonia question has been going on for thirty-two years and will probably continue for a good many more before it is finally settled. Macedonia was merely the preliminary dry bone, over which the dogs

of war were quarrelling, in order to obtain an excuse to reach the rich meat which lies behind. The struggle had been working up for years and nothing could settle it except the arbitrament of arms. The issue at stake was a national one and was regarded as such not only by the Turks, but by the Slavs. It was the final effort to drive the Turk out of Europe across the Hellespont, into Asia. That is how the Turks read the situation and that is why they were determined to fight the matter out once and for all, even though they had been caught at a great military disadvantage.

There were many who believed up to the last moment that there would be no war, because neither Turkey nor the Balkan States would dare disobey the mandate of the Powers that they must not fight, and that even if they did so none of the combatants would be allowed to reap any rewards either territorial or pecuniary from their victory. This last threat, however, hit both ways, because if the victors are to gain no material laurels, the losers cannot suffer any loss. But in reality the beseechings and threats of the Powers carried very little weight with the Turks or with the Balkan States. Both knew perfectly well that throughout the negotiations Europe had been hopelessly divided, and that concerted action to preserve peace had been brought about only with the utmost difficulty, in spite of the repeated declarations of Foreign Ministers that all the Powers were in complete accord.

For instance, over the question of the guarantees, every Turk thoroughly believed, whether it was true or not, that Sir Edward Grey only consented to bring pressure to bear on Turkey with the utmost reluctance and as a very last resource. Thus the collective Note was still-born before it was delivered. The Turkish Government, and also the Allies, knew perfectly well that, however much the Powers

might threaten and back up their threats with a united protest, the moment the first shot was fired the collectiveness of Europe would at once evaporate into thin air, and that an entirely new diplomatic situation would be created, over which the Powers would be hopelessly at loggerheads and unlikely ever to agree, so that there would still be an excellent chance of the victor reaping material as well as moral rewards from the war.

All the good offices of Europe were brought to naught by the mistrust in which both Russia and Austria were held by the Turks, as well as by the Balkan States. No one in Turkey believed that Austria and Russia were working in the interests of peace from the humane standpoint, but merely to postpone the struggle, because they themselves were not ready to take part, and to fish for spoils from the troubled waters of the Near East. To make an analogy showing the true position of Russia and Austria; here was a case of vast importance which had suddenly come into court for settlement. Austria and Russia were the two K.C.'s who were to lead either side, but who happened at the moment to be busy elsewhere. They were not, however, willing to see their junior counsel, Turkey and the Balkans, fight it out between them, and they were thus making frantic efforts to have the case postponed until the next sessions, when they hoped to be present and play the leading *rôle.*

At the same moment that the Russian Note was presented in Sofia, Russian officers were giving their Bulgarian and Servian cousins, who were leaving St. Petersburg to join their regiments on the frontier, such an enthusiastic send-off as effectually to calm any misgivings which might have been felt in Bulgaria as to the ultimate attitude of Russia. The scenes at the railway station in St. Petersburg were described as follows in *The Times* of Saturday, October 5th.

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

REFUGEES ON THE MARCH.

"Although the hour of departure had been kept secret, the station was crowded by an enthusiastic throng, cheering and singing 'Shumi Maritza' and 'Bozhe Tsurya Khrani.'

"Hundreds of Russian officers were present. They carried their Bulgarian comrades on their shoulders into the railway carriages. In the Imperial waiting-room a delegate of the Slavonic Society, in an impassioned speech, acclaimed the present union of the Balkan Slavs, and wished them a speedy victory. But if Providence ordained reverses, let them remember that their Russian brothers would not forsake them. All the Russians present shouted 'Verno,' 'Verno' (true, true). A Servian priest then solemnly blessed the departing warriors, bidding them restore the Cross on St. Sofia."

The next move in this stupid game of make-believe was the presentation by the Powers on Thursday, October 10th, of a collective Note to the Sublime Porte, demanding the fulfilment of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin. This provided for the reform of Macedonia under European control, and would have meant in effect the virtual loss of that province to Turkey. Everyone knew that the Turkish Government would have had to face a counter-revolution if it had acceded to the demands of the Powers. The Committee of Union and Progress had very cleverly announced its intention of supporting the Government in defence of Ottoman Rights, thereby ensuring its return to power if the Government should give way to the pressure brought to bear on it by the Powers. Nevertheless the Note was presented with all due ceremony, diplomacy thinking, like a second in a Prussian duel, that if men were to kill one another they might as well do it according to the strict rules of etiquette.

Turkey, of course, politely and vaguely expressed her inability to comply with the demands of the Powers,

and Europe waited for the next move in the game. This was to come on Sunday, October 13th, when the Balkan League, its war preparations completed, threw off the veil, repudiated the authority of the Great Powers, and declined to accept their promises to take in hand the realisation of reforms in Turkey. Further, it declared it would only be satisfied with radical reforms, sincerely and honestly carried out, and in conclusion the League invited Turkey to apply the reforms indicated in Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin. It insisted that the principle of Nationalities must be observed, called for the administration of the Provinces under Belgian or Swiss Governors, required the formation of elective assemblies, and the formation of a local gendarmerie and militia, and stipulated that reforms must be applied by a council composed in equal numbers of Christians and Moslems under the superintendence of the Ambassadors of the Powers and the Ministers of the Balkan allies in Constantinople. Further, Turkey was asked to complete the changes in six months and to recall her orders of mobilisation.

The Powers were aghast. The naughty children of the Balkans had actually dared to defy their mandate and it now dawned on European statesmen, apparently for the first time, that there was no possible means of bringing them to order. Any attempt would probably have meant a general conflagration in Europe. Of course the end had now come. On Tuesday, October 15th, Turkey decided to break off diplomatic relations with the Balkan States, and on the same day the preliminaries of peace with Italy were signed at Ouchy. On October 16th, the Turkish Ministers left the respective Balkan capitals and on Thursday, October 17th, Turkey declared war on Bulgaria and Servia and we enter upon the last phase of Turkey in Europe. On the following day, Greece followed suit by also declaring war on Turkey.

CHAPTER IV

THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE TURKS

Before the outbreak of the present war there was a widespread belief in the military prowess of the Turks, the average person regarding them as a warlike nation who have been trained in the use of arms ever since Constantinople was captured by Mahmoud in 1453. As a matter of fact, this is an error.

After the first wave of Mahommedan fanaticism had spent itself, the military power of the Empire was furnished by the Janissaries, who were not in the first place Mahommedans, but Christians in the employ of the Sultans. One hundred years before the conquest of Constantinople the Sultans hit upon the idea of forming a personal bodyguard by seizing the children of their Christian subjects at a tender age, forcibly educating them as Mahommedans, and training them in the use of arms. These troops were called "Yeni Tcheri," or "new soldiers," a term which afterwards became corrupted into Janissary. Celibacy was imposed on them, and they were enrolled in a sort of military family and supported at the Sultan's personal expense. Their very banner bore as its badge a saucepan with the arms of the Padisha upon it—a potent reminder of the source of their sustenance. The idea was to form a Pretorian Guard of soldiers, having no ties or affinity with the conquered peoples from among which they were

seized, or with the turbulent conquering castes which were a constant source of unrest in the Empire.

The Sultans were not slow to discover that in the Janissaries they had found an excellent instrument of despotism, for they were not only useful as a conquering foil, but also as an infallible means of maintaining order amongst the heterogeneous medley of creeds and races within the borders of the Empire. Their institution was rendered additionally necessary by the fact that the Turkish population of Anatolia could no longer support the terrible drain of human life which the constant wars of the Sultans imposed upon it, and this was the only safe means of obtaining recruits from the subject Christian races. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Suleiman the Magnificent, the Conqueror of Rhodes, multiplied the Janissaries into a huge standing army. In one year he caused to be circumcised no fewer than 40,000 Christian children.

The Turks then began to lose their warlike habits and the Janissaries fought all their battles for them. They remained almost invincible up to the year 1580, but then the decline set in, and so rapid was the process of disintegration that early in 1680 Savary de Breves, the French Ambassador in Constantinople, wrote a book on the approaching break up of the Ottoman Empire. He had never heard of the *status quo* and could not foresee that for two and a half centuries the pariah dogs of Europe would be too busy quarrelling amongst themselves to devour the putrefying corpse of Islam.

Under a strong Sultan the discipline of the Janissaries was maintained and they were a source of strength to the Empire. When the ruler was effete, discipline was relaxed and the Janissaries degenerated into a horde of proud Pretorians running the country in their own interests and setting up or pulling down the principal Ministers of State at will. By

1622 they had already become such a nuisance that Osman II. decided to disband them and to substitute a national army recruited from all classes of his subjects. A horde of Ulemas, Sipahis, and other palace parasites, fearful that their privileges and perquisites might be cut short by a Sultan with such a misplaced passion for reform, joined hands with the Janissaries and applied to the Sheik-ul-Islam for permission to dethrone a ruler who dared to flaunt the sacred Code of Mahomet in such a flagrant manner. The Sheik-ul-Islam, whose possessions were also in danger, readily acceded to their request. So the Janissaries, after massacring Osman and his Grand Vizier, indulged in an orgy of pillage which had never been equalled even in the troubled history of Islam.

It was not until 1826 that any Sultan found himself strong enough to disband these dreaded Pretorians. Then, at the order of Mahmoud II., twenty thousand of them were massacred and the remainder, sixty thousand in number, were disbanded; the Nizam, or recruited army, being substituted. Henceforth, by a strange anomaly, the recruits for the army were drawn from amongst the least warlike section of the people, namely, the peasants of Anatolia, the reason being that the Ottoman Government has never been sufficiently strong to subdue the warlike tribes—which inhabit, for the most part, the mountainous districts—and to enforce military service on them.

The Kurds in the Caucasus, the Arabs in the Yemen, and the Albanians on the Adriatic have been in more or less open rebellion for some years. Against these hardy warriors the peaceful peasants of Anatolia are constantly being mobilised, only to perish in battle, or more often from neglect and starvation, in the outlying provinces of the Empire. The best blood of the nation has been drained from the heart of Anatolia to be spilt in the burning sands

of the Yemen or in the mountains of Albania and the Caucasus. The wastage of life has been tremendous.

Meanwhile the fertile soil of Anatolia is deserted by all save old men, women, and children. The Anatolian peasants who were marching to do battle against the Balkan Crusaders, knew that a similar measure of neglect and suffering would be their only reward. Thus it was they marched in silence and sadness to sell their lives like heroes at the command of a Government which had not even made arrangements to supply them with the bare necessaries of life.

If we briefly survey the history of Turkey in the last 100 years, since the abolition of the Janissaries, we shall find that she has been beaten in every war in which she has been involved, with the exception of the war of 1897 against Greece, when she possessed such immense numerical superiority as to render victory over the none too courageous Greeks inevitable. In the defence of armed fortresses, however, the Turks have repeatedly shown proof of astonishing courage and endurance, and it is on this trait in their military character that their reputation as soldiers is based. But the defence of fortresses, however stubborn and prolonged, is not sufficient of itself for the winning of wars, although it may seriously delay an invader and inflict severe losses upon him. It is merely a useless waste of life when there is no field army to give battle to the enemy, when his forces have been weakened by a prolonged siege, or prepared to take the offensive after relieving the beleaguered fortress.

But whenever the Turks have given battle in the open field, or essayed an offensive movement of any kind, they have been badly beaten, not because they lack courage, but by reason of the inefficiency of their officers, the want of training among their men, and a general deficiency of any form of military organisation.

The heroic defence of Plevna in the war of 1878, when 40,000 Turks, under Osman, held more than 100,000 Russians at bay for nearly six months, and were only finally defeated by the slow process of a regular siege and by the arrival of two Roumanian Army Corps, is the latest and greatest feat of arms upon which the reputation of the Ottoman army is based. It should be remembered, however, that after Osman had surrendered while trying to fight his way out of the beleaguered fortress, the Turkish power collapsed, and within a few weeks hordes of Cossacks had overrun the whole of Turkey in Europe, while the main Russian army was encamped at San Stefano within ten miles of the Capital and only prevented from setting up the Cross in Byzantium by the presence in the Bosphorus of the British Fleet.

The course of nearly all Turkey's wars in the nineteenth century has been much the same. First a few successes, then a mismanaged advance ending in disaster, followed by the heroic but useless defence of some fortress, and after that the deluge. Unfortunately for Turkey, the jealousies of the European Powers have always saved her Empire in Europe from dismemberment, and she has been allowed to remain in possession of territories which she was unable to defend, and which were involving her in constant and bloody wars. The loss of life and the suffering which this policy of the Powers has involved, are appalling to contemplate. The best blood of Turkey has been drained from the fertile vilayets of Asia Minor to be spilt in a hopeless struggle in the land of the giaours; thousands of Russian peasants have perished fighting for a country in which they had no interest, and the Christian, Greek, and Bulgarian inhabitants of the Balkans have been repeatedly ravaged and decimated.

When we consider the terrible list of wars which Turkey has had to fight in the last century, and when we consider

that her armies have been almost entirely recruited from among the Mohammedan subjects of the Empire, we no longer wonder that the country is backward and misgoverned, our only surprise is that the Turkish race has not ceased to exist. The strain upon the vitality of the Ottoman Turks has, of course, been very severe, and to-day they number less than one-third of the total population of the Empire.

All over Europe the nineteenth century was marked by the awakening of national feeling among subject races. Italy was destined to free herself from the Austrian yoke, but the first rising was that of 1821, when Greece revolted against Turkish rule and the Turks retaliated by hanging the Patriarch on his own church door in Constantinople, and by massacring or reducing to slavery the 70,000 inhabitants of the island of Chios. The war was destined to last eight years. During this time the Turks, unable to subdue the Greeks, sent to Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, for assistance. The latter with his very efficient fleet and army was on the point of reducing the Greeks to submission or rather annihilation, when the Powers stepped in and destroyed the Turkish fleet at Navarino. Soon afterwards Russia declared war and occupied Adrianople in 1828 without encountering much resistance. Meanwhile Mahomed II. had in 1826 disbanded the Janissaries, and made futile efforts to carry on the war with a hastily recruited Nizam (regular) army.

At the Conference of London in 1830 the Powers ordained that Greece should become an independent kingdom, and the Russian army was politely but firmly requested to leave the neighbourhood of Byzantium and to return to its native lair.

Turkey was only to enjoy two years of peace, for in 1832 Mehemet Ali, who was nominally only the Governor of Egypt, appointed by the Sultan and removable at will,

declared himself independent and quietly annexed the whole of Syria to his newly-created kingdom. Mehemet's son, Ibrahim, at the head of an Egyptian army, easily destroyed all the Turkish troops that were sent against him, and the Sultan in his extremity was constrained to call upon his old enemies the Russians for assistance. Mehemet made peace, but obtained the Viceroyalty of Syria for his lifetime. Soon afterwards, however, having reformed his army under French supervision, he proceeded to invade Turkey, annexed Crete, and destroyed all the Turkish armies which were sent against him.

The break-up of the Ottoman Empire appeared to be inevitable, when, by a stroke of genius, the Sultan summoned representatives from among all nationalities and creeds of his subjects and read the famous Hatti Sherif of 1839, which, besides granting a constitution, proclaimed the equality of all races within the Empire, and generally promised the dawn of a golden age in Turkey. The apparent intention of the Sultan to reform his decaying Empire so worked upon the sympathies of the Powers, and more especially upon those of England—to whom incidentally the break-up of Turkey was by no means welcome—that they intervened, and after a blockade of Alexandria by the allied fleets, the rebellious Pasha of Egypt was constrained to abstain from further assaults on his master's property.

But even now, after almost twenty years of continual warfare, Turkey was not destined to enjoy peace in which she could recover from her almost mortal wounds. An insurrection broke out in Kandia, and the Emir-el-djebel (Prince of the Mountains), not at all liking the equality of all races and religions which the Hatti Sherif had proclaimed, raised the Holy Standard in Arabia, and massacred all the Christians whom he could lay his hands on. The insurrection spread so wide, and was accompanied by such

fearful bloodshed and atrocities, that the Powers were once more obliged to intervene in order to rescue the Sultan from his unruly subjects.

Europe now looked forward to a few years of peace in the Near East, as all possible combatants were apparently exhausted, but such hopes were vain, for no sooner had the Emir-el-djebel been subdued than the Shah of Persia suddenly invaded Turkish territory. This attack was rather like the case of one old inmate of a workhouse attacking another with his crutch when the master had his back turned, for the Shah ruled over the only Empire in the world which for decrepitude and bad government could compare with Turkey. The Shah was repulsed after much bloodshed, but in the meantime anarchy broke out all over the Turkish Empire, due chiefly to the reforms which the Sultan was misguided enough to attempt to enforce. Sixty-eight years later, the Young Turks were destined to produce an exactly similar state of affairs by their ill-fated Constitution.

Anarchy reigned supreme in Turkey for years, but without any interference of the Powers, who were for the most part far too busy in quelling their own disturbances at home, which culminated in the revolutions of 1848. During this time the awakening of national spirit among the Slavs of the Balkans began to take definite form. They were too weak to free themselves from the Turkish rule by their own unaided efforts, and so their hopes were centred on Russia, who was looked upon as the great liberator. So, in 1853, Russia, stimulated by the weakened state of the Ottoman Empire, embarked on her great attempt to drive the Turks out of Europe, and to set up the Czars in Byzantium.

Europe, and more especially Austria, had been so shaken by the revolutions of 1848, that Nicholas I. expected to be

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

Our Cart with Bryant and Beavor.

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

A Turkish Colonel.

allowed to fulfil his crusade in peace, but he reckoned without the ambition of Napoleon III. and the fears of England.

At first the Russians were everywhere successful, the Turks, however, distinguishing themselves for the heroic defence of Silistria in Bulgaria, and of Kars in Asia Minor. Then England and France invaded the Crimea, and Russia was compelled to abandon all hope of reaching Byzantium. The Turkish troops which were attached to the allies in front of Sevastopol proved themselves of little value in the field.

Once again the Turkish Empire in Europe was only saved from complete disintegration by foreign intervention. Left to themselves the Russians would in all probability have succeeded in setting up the Cross on St. Sofia.

After the Crimean War, the intercourse of Turkish rulers and statesmen with Western civilisation proved a further source of weakness for the Empire, in that it rendered them less and less qualified to govern their Mahommedan subjects. The Sultan Abdul Aziz in 1867 took the unprecedented step of visiting Queen Victoria, Napoleon III., and the Emperor of Austria. There was a terrible outcry among Mahommedans against this unheard-of innovation, but the Sheik-ul-Islam, hard-pressed to justify his master's breach of the laws of the Koran, invented the fable that "The Sultan had embarked on a voyage of conquest, and that so great was his prestige and the fear of his power, that each country in which he had set foot had at once submitted to his rule. By an extraordinary act of magnanimity, however, he had personally visited each sovereign and restored his possessions to him."

This childish fable quelled the outcry in Islam, and had the additional merit of giving rise to some admirable *bons mots* on the subject in Paris at the expense of Napoleon III.

Turkey was now entering on the last phase of her

chequered history in Europe, and the final struggle of the Slav nationalities for independence was about to begin. The foundation of a Bulgarian Exarchate—independent Bulgarian Church—in 1842, was their first step toward independence. In 1875 isolated rebellions broke out all over the Balkans, but were subdued by the Porte without much difficulty, and Bismarck was able to declare in the Reichstag shortly afterwards that the "Political heaven had never been clearer." Three weeks later the Servians rose to a man in revolt against the Turkish yoke and the Balkan Peninsula was plunged in the throes of a ghastly war.

European diplomacy was destined to prove equally badly informed in 1912. Turkey's situation was complicated by the fact that Gladstone had allowed himself to be hoodwinked by the Russians into believing that the Turkish troops possessed a monopoly of the atrocities committed in the Balkans, whereupon he started his Turkish atrocity cry and turned away the sympathies of Europe from the Ottoman army. Meanwhile, the Sultan, Abdul Aziz, was deposed, through the machinations of the newly-founded "Young Turks" under Midhat Pasha, and the Sultan Murad substituted for him. Abdul Aziz shortly afterwards committed suicide with the assistance of two assassins whom Murad sent to him, and Murad soon going mad, the notorious Abdul Hamid was set up in his place. The Servians were getting the worst of the war, and practically all their resistance had been crushed when, in 1877, Russia declared war against the Porte and marched to the assistance of her Slavonic cousins. Then came the heroic defence of Plevna, after which the Russians occupied the whole of European Turkey up to the walls of Constantinople.

By the Treaty of San Stefano Turkey granted autonomy to the Bulgarians and ceded the whole of the Eastern Balkans up to Adrianople to them. To the Servians was given a large

portion of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to Montenegro a portion of Northern Albania. Roughly speaking, these nascent Balkan States were given the territory that they are now claiming after the accomplishment of their successful crusade. Once again Russia was to be baulked of the fruits of victory. The Powers stepped in, revoked the Treaty of San Stefano, and at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 Roumania and Bulgaria were created autonomous principalities to serve as a buffer to the ambitions of Russia, a large portion of Roumelia being restored to Turkey as well as the fortress of Erzerum in Asia Minor.

Some idea of the drain which these successive wars made on the resources of Turkey may be gathered from the fact that the Crimean War cost Russia £160,000,000 and some 100,000 men. For the war of 1877–8 she brought some 460,000 men into the field at a cost of £200,000,000. The cost to Turkey and her losses in men are not known, but they must have been almost as great. At this time began the migration of the Turks out of the conquered provinces in Europe back to Asia Minor, rather than live under Christian rule. The migration was destined to culminate in the war of 1912, when practically the whole Ottoman population abandoned Turkey in Europe.

In 1885 Eastern Roumelia fell to Bulgaria, which kingdom remained under the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan until 1908, when Prince Ferdinand seized the opportunity afforded by the Young Turk revolution of declaring his principate an independent kingdom, with himself as Czar.

At the close of the campaign of 1877–8, national sentiment had not reached a high state of development among the Bulgarians, so that when Bulgaria was made an independent principate by the Treaty of Berlin, she was only too contented to become the instrument of Russia, and would have offered no resistance to being incorporated in

the Empire of the Czar. But the spread of Western ideas and education soon began to foster the spirit of independence in Sofia, and before long the statesmen of St. Petersburg were obliged to recognise that they had created a nation with definite ambitions, which would block the road to Byzantium to them for all time. Accordingly, after a short time, they began to devote their energies toward the acquisition of territory in the Far East.

Meanwhile, the tyranny of Abdul Hamid was to ensure to Turkey thirty years of comparative external peace; but they were dark years for the Christian subjects of the Empire. This tyranny of Abdul Hamid was merely the policy which the Turkish Government has always pursued, carried to its highest form.

The Turks are the fruit of the blending of the warlike autocracy of the Mongols with the religion of the ascetic Arabs of the desert. The result of this combination was a fanatical and courageous race, which, after flooding the fertile lands of Asia Minor, swept on over Byzantium, and only exhausted its force against the walls of Vienna. Upon their inruption into Byzantium, however, these fanatical and ascetic warriors came into contact with the most effete and corrupt civilisation that the world has ever seen. Byzantium was a cesspool of vice and corruption, polluting all streams which flowed through its fœtid waters.

So the Sultans of Turkey left their tents and went to live in the palaces of the Greek Emperors, where, in the scented luxury of the harem, their energy was sapped by a life of erotic indulgence. As their love of luxury and extravagance increased, so arose the necessity of draining more and more money from their conquered provinces, and as they no longer possessed the physical energy to initiate sound methods of government, they entrusted the task of collecting their revenues to the corrupt Pashas of the different provinces, to

whose interest it was to extort the uttermost farthing from their down-trodden subjects, regardless of all the economic principles of taxation.

The Turks have never been a constructive race, or attempted to create a centralised Empire like the Romans. Their object has been to obtain as rapidly as possible, and with a minimum expenditure of effort, a land in which to live and a plentiful revenue.

They have conquered those who were too weak to resist, but with the strong—the inhabitants of the mountains or the frontier districts—they have compromised, so that their Empire is a patchwork of races and creeds ; some enjoying complete autonomy, others a modified form of vassalage ; others again being subjected to heart-breaking subjection.

The orthodox Christians have from the earliest times formed a State within the State, having their own patriarch, archbishops, and bishops, and enjoying complete religious freedom. This has not saved them, however, from the most appalling economic oppression, for the Turkish Government of the European provinces has always resembled the head-quarters staff of an army camped in a hostile country, only anxious to draw the maximum of supplies for its men, regardless of the fact that in doing so it is reducing the land to a desert.

To-day in Thrace, the only roads, the only wells and fountains, the only decent buildings, are those left by the Romans, and the country which 1000 years ago was one of the principal granaries of Europe, is now one of the world's waste places.

The same ruin and decay are to be seen in Constantinople, which, when Constantine was Emperor in Byzantium, must have been one of the wonders of the world. Now the statues have disappeared from the Hippodrome ; the palaces of the Greek Emperors no longer hang like marble dreams

upon the shores of the Bosphorus; the streets of Stamboul are badly paved, decrepit, and narrow as rabbit warrens; the sanitary arrangements of the city are non-existent, and when a house tumbles or is burned down, it is not rebuilt for years—the great fire of four years ago destroyed 15,000 houses in Stamboul, and no attempt has been made as yet even to clear away the ruins.

The policy of extortion was never more ruthlessly pursued than during the reign of Abdul Hamid. The ambition of this modern Nero, so soon as he had got rid of the constitutionally-minded Midhat Pasha by having him strangled in some remote Arabian gaol, was to awaken the primitive fanaticism of the Mahommedan world by stamping out all Western ideas and innovations with a ruthless hand, and to weld together his empire by appealing to the spirit of Pan-Islamism.

A study of history had taught him that directly any section of the Christian subjects of the Empire became too prosperous or powerful, they purchased arms and revolted against the tyranny of the Khalifate. Accordingly, when any of his Christian subjects showed signs of incipient prosperity, agents were instructed to excite the fanaticism of their Mahommedan neighbours, until such time as they should fall upon the rebellious Christians and reduce their villages and lands to a wilderness. In this way he caused some 30,000 Armenians to be massacred in cold blood by the savage Kurds, not because he disliked them as a race—his own mother was an Armenian—but because he thought that they were becoming politically dangerous, and because he wished to nourish the spirit of Pan-Islamism with a little Christian blood.

The Albanians he kept in hand by taking the best of their manhood to serve in his own highly-paid bodyguard.

In Macedonia, which was inhabited for the most part by

Greek and Bulgarian Christians, he pursued a policy of rigid repression which effectually stifled the economic and intellectual progress of the province. The different vilayets were abandoned to the tender mercies of corrupt Pashas, whose instructions were to extort the uttermost farthing from their Christian subjects. The principal instruments of extortion which the Pashas employed were the army, the law, and the roads. Any Christian with property was liable to be seized and imprisoned repeatedly, each time having to pay the tax for exemption for military service, irrespective of the number of occasions on which he had already paid all that was due from him.

Christian landowners also frequently found that their property had been claimed by a Mahommedan, who was in reality an agent of the courts. The claimant would produce perhaps twenty professional witnesses—of whom a large number were attached to every court—in support of his claim, and the landowner would find himself involved in litigation culminating probably in the loss of his land, and even imprisonment, unless, being wise in his generation, he went immediately to the judge and paid his price, in addition to rewarding the claimant and his regiment of professional witnesses.

Then, too, light women of Christian origin were induced to supplement the wages of sin by coming to court to swear that they were Mahommedans and had been violated by a number of unfortunate Christians who had fallen victims to their charms. This is a capital offence in Turkey, and the whole lot were immediately arrested and left to rot in gaol, until such time as their families should purchase their freedom.

Road-building, however, was the sport in which the Pashas most delighted. The order would go out from the Sublime Porte that a road was to be built—say, from

Monastir to Uskub. The simplest way to construct it was by means of the corvée, and a few weeks' work from the inhabitants of each village would probably have completed the road. But this did not suit the Pashas, so they took the peasants from the neighbourhood of Monastir and sent them to work around Uskub, while the peasants from Uskub were sent into the Monastir district. There these unfortunates were left without provisions or instructions until such time as they should begin to murmur at their treatment. The Pasha at once announced that a revolt had broken out, and would descend with a swarm of gendarmes and Bashi-Bazouks upon the villages of the unfortunate men of the corvée, pillaging their homes and confiscating all that they could lay their hands on. In the end the road would remain unbuilt, while the Pasha and his minions pocketed about five times the amount of money necessary for its construction.

It is only fair to say that, in the Mahommedan province of the Empire, the unfortunate Mussulmans were equally, if not more, oppressed by the Pashas and other officials.

Gradually, and as education spread in Macedonia, the Macedonian revolutionary committee sprang into existence, and unrest among the Christian population became widespread. Then the Nero of the Bosphorus set in motion his pet policy of atrocities, in order to crush the spirit of the rebellious Macedonians, with every refinement of cruelty. Word was passed to the Bashi-Bazouks to massacre and plunder the Christians, which they at once proceeded to do with the best will in the world.

The Albanians, also, were told that there was no objection to their crossing the frontier and enjoying themselves in Macedonia, which they proceeded to do with the peculiar ferocity of this race. A typical example of the atrocities is that of the three Albanian landowners, who, having

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

RETREATING FROM LULE BURGAS ALONG THE ROMAN ROAD.

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drunk rather too freely at luncheon, went out into the fields and started shooting at their Christian labourers, three of whom were wounded and one killed. When an old workman cried shame on them, saying that the dead man had left a wife and children to starve, they became penitent, and, sending for his family, proceeded to kill them also to save them from the horrors of penury.

But the Turks had yet to

> "Learn in some wild hour
> How much the wretched dare."

Many of the Christians, after seeing their houses burned and their women outraged, took to the mountains, and, forming themselves into bands, offered effective resistance to the Turkish police and Bashi-Bazouks. Then Abdul Hamid sent an army to subdue the province, and in 1901 no fewer than 100,000 Turkish soldiers were quartered in Macedonia.

As the Government failed to provide these soldiers with any of the necessaries of life, they soon started to roam about the country pillaging the peasants for food—although, being drawn from among the peasants of Anatolia, they were by nature the kindliest and gentlest of men. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the Greek Christians started to massacre the Bulgarians, and the Bulgarians the Greeks, while both equally massacred and were massacred by the Turks. So that complete anarchy reigned in Macedonia, and Abdul Hamid had attained his object, in that he had rendered the province too weak to revolt against his will.

Things became so bad that by 1902 the major portions of the educated Bulgarians had migrated across the frontier to Sofia, where they filled many important positions. In that year 20,000 out of Sofia's population of 60,000 were refugees from Macedonia, and their total number in Bulgaria exceeded 200,000. The sight of half-starving Macedonian

refugees arriving at the frontier with fearful tales of persecution and outrage excited the most intense feeling among all sections of the Bulgarian and Servian populations. It is, in fact, twenty years since these two little States first started arming with the definite purpose of ending an intolerable situation, and of winning freedom for their fellow Slavs in Macedonia.

The expediency of declaring Macedonia an autonomous province was more than once discussed among the Powers, but on each occasion they allowed themselves to be seduced into inaction by that red-handed old tyrant of Yildiz Kiosk, Abdul Hamid, who used to meet their ultimata with a semblance of penitence, and produce an elaborate scheme of reform for Macedonia, which was immediately afterwards restored to the shelves of the Sublime Porte, until such time as another ultimatum necessitated its re-appearance in public.

Fortunately for him, the Powers were at this time too much occupied with their own schemes of robbery to bother about Macedonia. England had the Boer War on her hands, Russia was busy making conquests in the Far East, and the German Emperor was busy fraternising with Abdul Hamid, with the object of obtaining railway concessions in Asia Minor. So that in the end all that was done was the creation of an international gendarmerie in that country.

All this time, unobserved by the Powers—save perhaps by Russia and Austria—the little Slav nationalities of the Balkans were arming, arming, arming, and looking forward to the moment when they could start their heroic crusade against the putrefying Colossus of Turkey, and win freedom for their brethren in Macedonia.

In 1908 came the Young Turk revolution, which was heralded as the dawn of a golden age for the Ottoman Empire. Racial animosities were to disappear, constitutional

government was to take the place of a soul-killing despotism, the finances and the army were to be reformed, and a new Turkey was to rise like a phœnix from the ashes of the old *régime*. Government by "atrocities" was to end, and so confident, or rather ignorant, were the ambassadors of the Powers that they allowed the international gendarmerie to be abolished, upon which the old atrocities at once broke out again in Macedonia. What a harvest of disillusionment the Young Turks were destined to reap! Their Western education had taught them to care nothing for the Koran, and so, in the circumstances, they saw no reason why the different races of the Empire should not become united despite the differences of religion which had always separated them.

They made the same mistake that had been made in the Hatti Firman of 1839; they tried to unite all their subjects with the spirit of Ottoman nationality, irrespective of the Ottoman creed. They were foredoomed to failure, because the Ottoman has no nationality apart from his religion. Islam is at once his fatherland and his religion. So it was impossible to Ottomanise the Christian subjects of the Empire without converting them to Mahommedanism.

Incidentally, the Koran had taught the Turk to consider himself as belonging to a superior caste, so the Arabs of the Lebanon, among whom the Mahommedan religion had preserved a large measure of its primitive purity, objected strongly to being told that they were brethren with the despised Christians of Jerusalem and straightway broke out into open rebellion.

The Albanians, too, had no desire to abandon their proverbial freedom and anarchy for the taxes and military system of a well-ordered Government. They had no objection to belonging to the Turkish Empire as long as the honour brought no unpleasant obligations with it. When

the Young Turks tried to recruit them for service in the Yemen they flatly refused to go and fight against the Arabs, with whose cause they rather sympathised. So Albania broke out into open revolt.

We have already pointed out how in the first glow of good intentions, the Powers had consented to the abolition of the international gendarmerie in Macedonia. But the Greek and Bulgarian bands saw no fun in abandoning their dreams of freedom for the sake of being Islamised. So anarchy broke out worse than ever, and was complicated by the depredations of Turkish soldiers, who, having been sent to fight the Albanians and not being supplied with any food, became disbanded and prowled about Macedonia in search of the necessaries of life.

The Young Turks were awakening from their dream of a golden age, to find the Empire breaking up around them. The possibility of Ottomanising the Turkish Empire had passed for ever. The Ottoman population only equalled about one-third of the total population of the Empire, and so dead was the spirit of Islam, so incapable the Turks of government, that for sixty years Turkey's Grand Viziers had been almost exclusively Christians, Catholic Albanians, Jews, Armenians, or Greeks.

In other ways the Young Turk Revolution dealt a serious blow at the old faith of Islam. First of all the committee dethroned Abdul Hamid, who, despite his corrupt and cruel government, was none the less respected by his people as a religious symbol. In his stead they tried to set up a constitutional Government, which was manifestly absurd in a nation consisting of thirty-two different races, and where the only education of the majority of the people consists in a mechanical knowledge of a few religious shibboleths.

The doctrines of the Young Turks were in no sense

national. They were but lightly planted in a thin soil of European customs and beliefs, and had no root in the fertile flower garden of picturesque customs and beliefs, which was Islam. To the masses of the Mahommedan subjects of the Empire, the rule of the Young Turks meant little less than foreign domination.

In the old days, when the soldiers of Islam marched to war they marched at the call of the Padisha to do battle in the sacred cause of Islam against giaours whom they had been taught to despise and hate. They marched with enthusiasm because, although perhaps personally they had no interest in the war, they were marching to fulfil a religious obligation. On the present occasion they were marching at the orders of a Government in whom they had no belief to do battle against Christians, whom they had been told to regard as brethren, for a land in which they had no interest.

So little interest in Turkey in Europe have the Turks from Asia Minor, that on one occasion when an officer endeavoured to excite his men by telling them they were fighting for their country, the men replied, "But this is not our country; our country is in Anatolia."

In 1911 Italy made her sudden descent on Tripoli, and in October, 1912, the Balkan League, judging the moment propitious, began their twentieth century crusade for the liberation of Macedonia, to the horror and astonishment of the virtuous Western Powers, and to the secret amusement of Russia, who, after all, could reasonably expect to see one day a Slavonic emperor enthroned in Byzantium.

CHAPTER V

THE MODERN TURKISH ARMY

Amongst the radical changes which the Young Turks hoped to bring about was the complete reform of the Army. To aid them in their task, instructors were hired from the German Army, and the work proceeded apace. For the first time annual manœuvres were instituted, and I have read a report on those which were held around Adrianople in 1910, which shows the army in a very favourable light. It is written by a French officer. However, it is one thing to manœuvre four divisions of picked troops in time of peace, and quite another to handle four army corps in time of war. One of the generals in command in 1910 was the unfortunate Abdullah Pasha, and I believe he largely owed his promotion to the command of the army of Thrace to the fact that he was considered to have done so well in the manœuvres of 1910.

As I have already remarked, a study of the military history of the Ottoman Empire during the past century will show that the Turks have always been beaten in war—with the single exception of the war with Greece in 1907—but that isolated bodies of troops, when well commanded and placed behind entrenchments, have often put up the most heroic resistance. This seems to point to the fact that the senior officers have never been capable of handling large bodies of men; that

grand strategy in war is almost unknown in Turkey, and that the soldier himself lacks that dash and initiative in offensive movements which are so characteristic of the French and also of the Japanese.

The old type of Turkish soldier who existed up to the end of the Hamidian *régime* possessed many excellent qualities which rendered him individually a stubborn and formidable opponent for the best of troops. He was hardy and could exist on rations which would spell starvation for the troops of any other race. He was willing and obedient, and would follow his officer anywhere. He was accustomed to look after himself in the field and to regard the commissariat train as a doubtful ally which might, but which probably would not, be available at critical moments on a campaign. Therefore he learnt, not to be dependent on it, but to shift for himself, to collect provisions when they were available, and to husband them carefully against a rainy day. He cared little about the outward trappings of war. In appearance he was slovenly to a degree which would have made the Potsdam Guards blush with shame and horror; but on a campaign each man collected those articles of clothing and more especially of foot-gear which he found the most useful and the most comfortable.

Thus, even as late as the war with Greece in 1907, it was very seldom one saw a battalion with a common uniform. The troops resembled a collection of unemployed on a hunger march rather than a regular army. Some of the men wore boots, some sandals, some merely had rags tied round their feet, and some preferred to go barefooted. Of tactics and battalion manœuvres the Turks knew little and cared still less. In their place they possessed a natural instinct for war which caused them to stick together in moments of emergency and invariably to choose a strong

defensive position without having to have the ground carefully selected for them by their officers.

The old regular battalions possessed another great advantage, namely, that the men served together for very long periods at a time, knew and trusted one another, and resembled a large, united, and happy family. Great numbers of the men served long beyond the period rendered compulsory by the conscription. This was due to the fact that no register of births existed throughout the Ottoman Empire under the Hamidian *régime* and therefore many were able to escape the conscription altogether, while others were able to purchase exemptions, with the result that the authorities, in order to fill the ranks, often kept unfortunate paupers with the colours after their time was up, or would force them to serve afresh after they had been released from their first term.

The officers of the old Turkish Army were on a par with their men. They were superannuated, ignorant, almost untrained, totally devoid of any knowledge of the science of war and slovenly in their outward appearance. They served in the junior grades of subaltern and captain all their lives, but few ever obtaining promotion, in fact, the majority never expected promotion and were quite content to fill their humble *rôles*. A very large proportion also were promoted from the ranks, and had nothing to qualify them save their knowledge of the men. They served for years in the Yemen, in Macedonia and in the wilds of the Caucasus, forgotten by the War Office, often going for long periods without their pay, but nevertheless faithful to Islam.

These old officers were the backbone of the old Turkish Army. They knew their men and were respected and loved by them. On a campaign the men had the most implicit confidence in them, and would follow them anywhere.

The whole army marched to war at the command of the Padisha, not in defence of the territorial possessions of the Ottoman Empire, but in the cause of Islam against the infidel. Such was the old army which generally managed in the midst of reverses to cover itself with glory and to maintain the reputation of the Turkish soldier for stubborn courage.

The advent of the Young Turks to power brought about changes in the character of the army, which have had the most disastrous results during the present campaign. An army can only be reformed from the top, not from the bottom, but the Young Turks tried to change the rank and file without first reforming the War Office and creating a General Staff; for without efficient organisation and leadership, all drastic reforms in the men and material must necessarily be wasted in time of war.

The Young Turks wished to create an army on the model of the German, without stopping to consider if the material they were handling could be moulded into a new form without destroying all the durable qualities which had so often saved the Empire from complete disaster and disruption in the past. They set themselves the task, with the aid of German instructors, of substituting a national spirit, based on the territorial boundaries of the Empire, for the old cry of Islam, which had so often aroused the patriotism of the Turkish soldier in the past, and of substituting science, tactics, and the stern discipline of Prussia for the old natural instinct for war and self-reliance which had characterised the troops of the old *régime*. They thought that by changing the outward trappings of the soldier; by clothing him in the most modern of khaki uniforms; by placing putties round his legs and boots on his feet, and a khaki-coloured kalpack on his head in place of the traditional fez, and generally making him outwardly

up-to-date in appearance, they could construct an army on the model of the German, equal to it in efficiency and ability for the grand manœuvres of war.

It was the outward appearance of the soldiers as they left Constantinople for the front, which led so many critics to believe that the Turkish army was highly organised and more than capable of holding its own against the Allies. Truly the appearance of some of the battalions, as they paraded on the great square in front of the War Office before marching to the railway station, was magnificent, and seemed to ensure success. The Turk is naturally big and deep-chested, and when clothed in khaki with his great-coat strapped to his back, with the peculiar headgear consisting of a kind of combined shawl and hood, which could be passed over the kalpack to protect him from the cold, and which added several inches to his height, and with his brand-new Mauser rifle at his shoulder, he looked a warrior of which any nation might be proud.

But a closer examination, more especially when the troops were on the march, showed defects which were not at first apparent. The uniforms, which on parade seemed to fit so closely and to be so comfortable, soon began to lose their smart appearance and to sag ominously; the men began to stoop under the weight of ill-fitting knapsacks held to their backs by unaccustomed straps, and to fret at the great-coats slung round their bodies. Ill-arranged putties began to get loose and to flap round the legs of the marchers, who looked down at them in dismay, and after a few hundred yards many were already limping from sore feet, and hating the sight of their new boots. Many of the reservists carried their Mauser rifles in that gingerly manner in which a man will hold a young child, if suddenly called upon to do so, being totally unaccustomed to this new army, and having been schooled in the simplicity of the old Martini.

Thus long before the station was reached the illusion had vanished, and it was obvious that these Anatolian peasants were being sent to the front ill-trained and ill-disciplined, with ill-fitting and unaccustomed kits, and armed with a rifle which but a small proportion knew how to handle. From the very first we noticed a remarkable shortage of officers. Whole battalions would be equipped and drilled, and marched off with hardly one officer per company.

In their dealings with the old type of regimental officer the Young Turks made the most fatal mistake of all. Because they saw European armies with young regimental officers who enjoyed steady promotion, they said, "We must get rid of all these old subalterns and captains who were promoted from the ranks, and who are old enough to be colonels and generals, and replace them by young officers." Therefore, with a stroke of the pen they placed all the regimental officers over a certain age in retirement before they had a sufficiency of young officers to take their place. Thus for the last three years the Turkish Army has been woefully short of officers, and when the war broke out it was no fewer than two thousand below its proper establishment.

This fatal step destroyed the efficiency of the battalions to a lamentable extent. The old idea of the battalion being a happy family, where men and officers knew one another and had served together for many years, disappeared, and the confidence of the men was shaken by the introduction of a younger generation with new ideas of discipline, which did its utmost to impress on the men that the significance of their faith was as nothing, compared with the necessity of maintaining the territories of the Empire intact.

Neither was the new generation of officers prepared to lead the lives of their predecessors, who always remained with their battalions and shared the hardships and dis-

comforts of their men. The one idea of the new type of officer was to obtain a billet on the Staff which would give him an easy berth, and they spent every spare moment they could obtain in applying for leave and hastening to Constantinople, where they delighted to parade their fine new uniforms among the foreigners in the cafés and hotels of Pera, for even Stamboul no longer possessed attraction for their Europeanised minds.

Large numbers of officers were also sent to be educated in Berlin, Vienna, and Paris, and this move—sound in theory—has also had a highly detrimental effect on the character of the Turkish officers and discipline of the Army. The primitive fighting virtues of an Oriental race almost invariably disappear in the ratio in which the individuals are brought in contact with, and imbibe the ideas of, more civilised communities. We saw this among the European-trained Japanese officers in the Russo-Japanese War, and we see it still more clearly marked in the case of the Turk. A few years amongst the gaieties of the capitals of Europe invariably gives the Turkish officer a distaste for the hard life and poor fare of his own country. His faith in his religion disappears, and his patriotism weakens because he asks himself, "What am I fighting for? Merely a worn-out religion and a crumbling empire which offers me none of the attractions provided by the higher civilisations."

But worse than this. Having received a scientific military training and having been brought into contact with European armies and European methods, he returns to his own country full of his own importance and possessed with a profound contempt for his less fortunate comrades who have not received the same education as himself. He believes himself to be their superior because of his theoretical knowledge, and entirely forgets that all theoretical knowledge is quite wasted without practical experience of regimental life and the

handling of troops in the field. His natural desire is to avoid serving with his regiment at any price. He feels that only a billet on the Staff is good enough for him, for this will not only enable him to show his scientific knowledge of war, but also to remain in the capital and to live under conditions which approximate more closely to those he has been accustomed to in the European capitals.

If he is obliged to join his regiment he looks upon his superior officers, trained in the old school, with contempt, considering himself vastly their superior. He is continually levying veiled criticisms at his superiors, and undermining the discipline of the regiment by the open disapproval he displays for the orders he receives. His outwardly smart appearance is in glaring contrast with the slovenly uniforms of his comrades, and he feels himself entirely out of harmony with those whom he now regards, from his enlightened standpoint, as little better than barbarians. In consequence of the fatal step of having got rid of nearly all the old officers without having others to take their place, whole battalions left for the front with hardly any officers at all, whilst the cafés and hotels and streets of Pera and Stamboul were crowded with young officers in beautiful uniforms, who had nothing in particular to do, who were too proud to serve with their regiments and who had nominal, or were awaiting billets on the staff. Many of them never went near the front, and many who eventually did find their way up there, only stayed for a few days and seized the first available opportunity to return to the more congenial haunts of Pera, where, over coffee, liqueurs and cigars, they would describe the lamentable state of the army to an admiring circle of friends, and explain the causes which led to its defeat, without realising that they themselves were largely responsible for the *débâcle*.

In the early stages of the war many officers, as soon as the retreat on Chataldja had begun, left the front without leave and hastened to Constantinople, without reporting themselves to anyone. Thus the generals had no idea what had become of them and could take no steps to recall them to the front. This finally became such a scandal that Nazim Pasha took drastic steps to check the evil. No officers were allowed to leave without permission, and they were obliged to report themselves to the War Office on their arrival in the capital.

This brief summary will show the lamentable state of the Turkish Army when the war broke out. The Army Corps were split up and scattered over the Empire; the battalions were short of officers; the men had lost confidence in themselves and in their officers, and, above all, they were called upon to march to the defence of territories, in which they had but little interest, for the first time, not because Islam was threatened, but because the integrity of the Empire had to be preserved.

CHAPTER VI

THE AUTHORITIES AND THE CORRESPONDENTS

The life of the modern war correspondent cannot be described as being exactly a bed of roses. The glorious days of the profession, when William Russell and Archibald Forbes and their like flourished, have gone, never to return. Then the war correspondents were few in number, their papers were in no great anxiety to receive news almost before the event to be described had taken place, and the war correspondent would stay at the front for a certain period, then make his way leisurely to the nearest pillar box and slip in an uncensored letter describing his experiences. He did very little cabling, except on occasions of extreme importance, and then he had the entire field to himself and had nothing to fear from rivals hastening to get in their despatches ahead of his.

I often wonder how the great ones of the past would have fared under modern conditions, when competition is so keen that the war correspondent is kept in a continued state of nervous unrest from the moment he arrives at the scene of hostilities to that happy hour when he receives a cable to the effect "come home at once, spend no more money and all will be forgiven."

At the date when war broke out on October 16th, some thirty-five odd correspondents were assembled at Constantinople waiting for the first sound of the guns and for

the desired permission to accompany the army. Of these by far the larger number represented English papers, and almost every journal of note had a representative at the front, while some, like the indefatigable *Daily Mirror*, for instance, had a perfect bevy of photographers. Amongst well-known men assembled in Constantinople were Lionel James, *The Times*, M. H. Donohoe, the *Daily Chronicle*, Ward Price, the *Daily Mail*, Pilcher, *The Morning Post*, Allan Ostler, *Daily Express*. The French Press was also well represented; M. Rodes was there for *Le Temps*, M. Raymond for *L'Illustration*. The German Press was represented by Major von Zweiter, and the Austrian by Baron Binder von Kriegelstein. Then there were war correspondents representing papers in Denmark and Scandinavia, also two Russian correspondents who were believed by the Turks to be officers on the Headquarters Staff in disguise, and, as soon as the peace was signed at Ouchy, an Italian turned up to act for the *Corriera della Sierra*. It will be seen that we were a very representative body.

Now it is always necessary to pick out at the start of a campaign those who are likely to be formidable rivals, and those who can be more or less disregarded in the great race to get off news first. For instance, I knew from the start that my most dangerous rivals on this campaign would be my old friend Lionel James, the *doyen* of the war correspondents with the Turkish Army, and M. H. Donohoe, the highly experienced correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*.

It is now generally the custom for the representatives of at least two papers to work together so as to save expense, and also to obtain that feeling of comradeship which is always agreeable on a campaign. On this occasion Lionel James and Ward Price were working together, the old threepenny Thunderer linked for the first time with the famous halfpenny on account of the affiliation between

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

GREEK VILLAGERS AND OUR MOTOR-CAR.

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CALIFORNIA

those two journals at home. In these circumstances, Donohoe and myself agreed to work together, and it was a great relief to me to feel I had such a formidable and enterprising rival acting as a friend to share my fate for better or worse, rather than having to keep an eye on him all the time for fear he should steal a march on me over some important battle.

The English war correspondents have little to fear from the competition of their foreign rivals. I do not wish in any way to belittle the efforts of the Frenchmen, who are charming writers and still more charming companions; but the French system is entirely different from our own. They go in very little for cabling, they do not spend nearly so much money on their work, and, therefore, they are hardly in a position to compete for speed with ourselves. The Germans are much the same. They are so wedded to discipline that they obey every order given them by the authorities, and, in fact, seem hopelessly at sea unless they are being watched over by the Censor and his colleagues. They are themselves the first to admit that they lack that spirit of enterprise, which renders the English Press supreme during campaigns, when every opportunity must be seized like lightning, and not a minute lost if a rival is not going to beat you and obtain a "scoop."

The success or failure of the war correspondent depends almost always on the preparations he has made for sending off news from the front, before he actually starts on the campaign, and the men with experience are always certain, unless by a remarkable series of unforeseen occurrences, to beat those who are without experience and who are making their first campaign. The campaign in Thrace was an object lesson in this respect, and the old hands scored time and time again over their inexperienced rivals.

It is no use starting for the front with the intention of finding means to send off news after you have arrived on the battlefield, although of course unexpected means which you have not included in your pre-arranged plans may present themselves, and should be taken immediate advantage of. The first thing the war correspondent should say to himself is, " Where is the nearest point for sending off censored telegrams, and where is the nearest point for sending off uncensored despatches should the necessity arise ? " Having decided upon these two points, he should ask himself this question, " What will be the quickest means of getting news to the telegraph stations ? " Having decided on the most suitable means of communication, he must take steps to complete the organisation necessary to carry his good intentions into effect.

It was obvious in the present campaign that Constantinople was the only place from which to dispatch censored cables, and that Constanza in Roumania was the only place from which to send uncensored cables. The latter would have to be sent by the Roumanian boat which leaves Constantinople for Constanza every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. It was obvious, therefore, that if you missed sending your cable on Tuesday, it could not be sent until Thursday, and that if you missed Thursday, it could not go until Saturday, and that, if your rival sent his by the boat you had missed, he would have his news in the paper two clear days before you could have yours.

There was also one other means of speeding up a cable, namely, to have it sent by wireless telegraphy from the Roumanian boat to Constanza, the moment she was outside territorial waters. But this was made very little use of during the war, as the wireless was found to be far too unreliable for long and important messages, and cost two shillings a word just to reach Constanza.

It became obvious from the start that the authorities in Constantinople would only allow news favourable to Turkey to be sent from the capital, and that in the event of a reverse, Constanza alone would be available. The old hands, therefore, made elaborate preparations to have their cables dispatched to Constanza with a minimum of delay.

Then we had to consider how we could get messages rapidly from the front to Constantinople, in order that they might be sent on by the Roumanian boats. Donohoe and myself had many an earnest conversation on this all-important subject, and finally decided that a motor-car was essential. I will never forget as long as I live the troubles we had over obtaining a car suitable for a country where roads are non-existent, and where every ounce of petrol has to be carried.

I first of all entered into negotiations with the Pera garage for the hire of a car. I was shown one which, I was assured by the Greek proprietor, had frequently made the road to Adrianople without difficulty, and that he would guarantee it would do so again. I mistrusted the look of the old machine, but he reassured me, and as the price seemed reasonable, namely, one hundred pounds per month, I decided to hire it. The proprietor was exceedingly anxious that I should sign the contract and pay him one month's hire in advance without giving the car a trial, as he explained this was quite unnecessary, and he was busy overhauling the machinery and repainting the chassis. The contract contained a clause that in the event of our losing the car or it falling into the hands of the enemy, we should pay the modest sum of £600 by way of compensation. However, I refused to sign or to pay a penny until Donohoe and myself had given it an exhaustive trial by taking it out on a trip to San Stefano.

On the afternoon of the trial, my brother, Donohoe, and

myself repaired to the garage, where we found many mechanics putting the finishing touches to the old buz box and tuning her up. The owner had so carefully painted and polished up an old taxi-cab that its material defects were not apparent to the inexperienced eye. But the bluff was short-lived, for we never reached the Galata Bridge. The old machine smoked and roared and groaned, but could not even take the smallest hills, and finally caught fire in the high street; the tyres fell off at the same moment, and the chauffeur announced that he must return for repairs, as he did not quite understand the machinery. We returned and told the owner exactly what we thought of him.

It turned out on inquiry that this car was one of the original taxi-cabs introduced into Paris, and that, after serving a long term in the Parisian streets, it had been sent to the Near East. The papers the owner had shown us were all forged, and the value of the car was perhaps fifty pounds, yet he had tried to get us to pay £600 in the event of its being lost.

We confided our troubles to the obliging Colonel Izzet, who was one of the first to advise us to take a car to the front, declaring that it would be invaluable, as the roads were excellent, and that we could reach Adrianople in it in about five or six hours. Colonel Izzet then produced a sinister-looking Persian, whom he declared was the owner of a splendid new forty horse-power Panhard Limousine—the finest car in Constantinople, which could go anywhere and carry any number of passengers. He offered to give us a trial by motoring us out that very afternoon to San Stefano. This we accepted. The car went very well, negotiating all the bad spots on the road, passing through mud feet deep, and crawling up all the hills without much difficulty.

Then came the most troublesome task of all, namely, to settle on the terms of hire or purchase. Colonel Izzet acted as our interpreter and intermediary, and the meeting between the Persian, Donohoe, my brother, and myself took place in the War Office. The Persian turned out a hard task-master and demanded the modest sum of £1000 for the purchase of the car or £10 a day for the hire of it. As these terms proved too stiff we haggled and bargained, and, after threatening to break off the negotiations several times, we got the purchase price down to £900, and the rate for the hire by the day to £8.

Finally, we decided to take it for one month on trial, as we were not wholly convinced of what value the car would be at the front. Then a contract was drawn up in French by Colonel Izzet, who took the greatest pains to be fair to us both. This took an endless time, as all sorts of unexpected difficulties arose on such questions as to who was to supply the oil, and how much we were to pay for the car in the event of its being captured or destroyed. The Persian insisted on a guarantee of £1000, minus any sums we had paid by way of hire, but finally we got him down to £850. At last the contract was completed and he was very anxious we should sign it then and there, but this Donohoe and myself declined to do until we had made some independent inquiries to find out if the car was really what the owner professed it to be.

That evening we set our independent agents to work, and received two reports on our prospective purchase. It was nearly four years old and had been the property of an Egyptian prince for two years. The prince finally sold it for £450 to a merchant in Constantinople, who, in turn, parted with it a year later to its present owner, the Persian, for £350. The latter had done it up and had hired it at so much a day to tourists visiting Constantinople. It

was not a forty horse-power car at all, but only a twenty. This was the car for which our good friend the Persian had demanded £1000 or a guarantee of £850. Needless to say when he arrived at the Pera Palace Hotel that evening, all smiles, with the contract ready for signature, he received a somewhat cold reception and was politely shown the door.

This, however, did not help Donohoe and myself much, as at any minute we might be allowed to start for the front, and without a car how could we hope to compete with our leading rivals, *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*, who had purchased one second-hand for a considerable sum? It was utterly useless trying to hire one, as we knew we were bound to be swindled, and had no guarantee that the chauffeur, who was the servant of the owner, would not fail us at a critical moment in the campaign, or perhaps even decline to carry us near to some stricken field.

I then went to the principal agents in Pera and examined a new Panhard which they had for sale. It was an excellent car, having just arrived from Paris, very strong, and of 18–24 horse-power. The agents were very agreeable and honest in all their dealings, and produced all the necessary papers from the Panhard Company, showing the actual price they had paid for the car, the cost of its passage to Constantinople, and the Customs duty. They consented to forgo half their usual commission, and the car became our property for £700, which price included accessories and a spare pair of tyres. We thus had a great load off our minds and could now start on equal terms with *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*.

Little did we realise at the time the endless trouble and bother we would have with the car, with the various chauffeurs who attempted to handle it, and, above all, with the roads, which proved to be totally unsuitable for wheeled

traffic of any sort, except a country cart drawn by four strong oxen. However, let me say here in justice to the car and to our own judgment that it saved us at the most critical moment of the campaign, and enabled us to get off the news of the great defeat of Lule Burgas ahead of all our rivals. I had two rides in it, and Donohoe two also, and as the price paid for these rides was over £700, they were the most expensive journeys we had ever taken or ever wish to take.

The experiences I have just related were typical of many others endured by us whilst we were engaged in making our preparations to leave for the front. Every single detail had to be thought out beforehand, and every single article, from a horse to a tin of sardines, had to be purchased from people whose sole idea was to cheat and swindle you.

The fitting out of an expedition, the purchase of suitable horses, stores, and equipment, sounds a simple enough undertaking, but, in reality, in Constantinople the task was one of stupendous difficulty, exhausting both to the body and to the patience. The dragomen you engage, who carry about with them pages of references, cannot be trusted a yard, and are an additional burden, rather than an assistance. I and my brother had personally to superintend the buying and packing of every single article we might require for the campaign. The country through which the army would pass on its way to Sofia, which we were assured was our destination, would speedily be swept bare by the passage of two large armies, and we had to take everything necessary in the way of food supplies with us. I therefore bought provisions for two months.

We had ample opportunity of studying the character of the Christian population of Constantinople, both Greek and Armenian, and we often wondered at the moderation of the Turk at not having exterminated the lot years ago. There

is an old saying amongst the Turks that it takes two Jews to get the better of one Greek, and five Greeks to cheat one Armenian. These bastard races, which have dwelt for centuries amid a corrupt and effete civilisation, having no tradition of race, have not the slightest trace of a sense of decency or honour.

In fact, it seems that almost everyone who comes in contact with Constantinople becomes corrupted by the atmosphere of dishonesty and stagnation. Even Europeans seem to develop a sort of moral anæmia after a few years' residence in the Scarlet City. The Turks of the upper classes, and of the official world, are better than the Christians in one sense, in that they are honest in their dishonesty. They are all open to bribery, but can be trusted once they have taken the bribe, if they see the opportunity of doing any further business on the same terms. Corruption and vice have flourished for so many centuries in Constantinople, that there seems but little hope of stamping it out. The effete civilisation of Byzantium corrupted the Roman Emperors and the Greek and the Ottoman Dynasties in turn, and, until the entire population is replaced by another, Constantinople is likely to enjoy her evil reputation.

Before we left we were forced to the conclusion that the best thing that could happen to the town would be its complete destruction by fire, and for the inhabitants to perish in the flames, or to migrate in order to make way for a different race. But would this drastic step have any effect? Is the character of a race formed by the climate? as Mr. Maurice Baring believes. These questions cannot be dealt with here.

Finally, after endless trouble our preparations were completed, and we sat down at the Pera Palace Hotel to wait in patience for leave to join the army.

One of the first steps we took on arriving at Constanti-

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

THE TRACK TO STAMBOUL.

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

OVERTURNED TRAIN.

nople—and it is one of the most important for the war correspondent, to place himself on a satisfactory footing at once—was to find out the attitude of the authorities towards us, and to ascertain what facilities would be given us to carry on our work in a legitimate manner, and at the same time insure to the newspapers that we represented, that they should receive some value for the large sums expended on sending us to the Near East and in fitting us out for service in the field.

I do not intend at this stage to deal with the very complicated question of the future of the war correspondent, but I shall do so at a later stage, when the reader has been able to gauge, from a perusal of this work, the pros and the cons that both sides can bring forward in favour of their arguments for continuation or abolition.

On the occasion of our first visit to the War Office, we were received most politely, but, at the same time, informed that all who wished to accompany the army must obtain a recommendation from their respective Embassies. This was quite a reasonable request, but when I applied to Sir Gerard Lowther, I was informed by him that he could give no recommendation without the sanction of the Foreign Office in London. This really seemed a little absurd, Sir Gerard Lowther having known me personally for several years, while, at the same time, I came fully accredited from the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*. But Sir Gerard declared that, the Foreign Office having made such a regulation, he must abide by it. Why could not the Foreign Office have informed newspapers of their intention before we left for the Near East? It caused a delay which in this instance did not matter, but which might have had very serious results had we been granted permission by the Turkish Government to join the army immediately after our arrival. As it was, it entailed much cabling and inconvenience.

This little incident is typical of the methods of the procedure of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, which is a gigantic and highly organised piece of machinery for shifting responsibility from one person to another. All other Foreign Embassies appear to exist for the purpose of helping the subjects of their respective nations. The British, on the other hand, appear to exist for the express purpose of placing difficulties in the way of anyone who applies to them for assistance. Then, again, the British Embassies are invariably the worst-informed on what is passing in the country to which they are accredited. The British Embassy in Constantinople was a by-word in this respect. You could obtain more or less reliable news at the French, and Austrian, and German Embassies, or could, at any rate, carry on an intelligible conversation with someone who had some knowledge of the country, and who took some interest in his work, but the inmates of the British Embassy, with one notable exception, were always shrouded in a black mist of blissful ignorance and seemed to feel a personal resentment against the Turkish Government and all the Balkan States for having declared war, thus disturbing the even tenor of their peaceful and harmless, but almost useless lives.

The whole Service wants to be thoroughly reorganised on a basis which would make it of more value to England and to English commercial enterprises abroad. It is now a kind of happy hunting ground for youths who wish for an easy life amidst pleasant surroundings in foreign countries, where they suffer the fond illusion that their social position is bettered by being able to print "Attaché to the British Embassy" on their cards. It wants fresh blood and new brains, and men trained in commerce and in the fierce competition which English merchants abroad understand so

well. Then it might be worth all the expense and pomp which now attach to it.

The greater part of the money spent by the State year after year on ambassadors, first secretaries, second secretaries, councillors, dragomen, and a horde of lesser minions, is thrown into the gutter. Of course, amidst the gloom of ignorance, apathy, and general physical and mental debility which hangs over our Embassies like a leaden pall, there are some brilliant exceptions, but, in the main, few will gainsay the truth of the strictures I have made on a Service which is hopelessly out of date in this age of commercial competition.

It was obvious, even after presentation of the necessary letters of recommendation from the Embassy, that the military authorities were determined to delay our departure as long as possible. Day after day we visited Colonel Izzet at the War Office and were informed by him that a Code of Regulations was being drawn up and would be duly presented to us, after which passes to enable us to accompany the army would be issued by the War Office. Day after day we waited, and on each visit we were put off by an evasive reply. It recalled the long, dreary wait in Tokio, which I had experienced before being allowed to join the Japanese troops in Manchuria. The Oriental hates to give a decisive answer either by way of assent or refusal to a proposition, and prefers to keep negotiations running on indefinitely.

But Lionel James, Donohoe, and myself had all had previous bitter experience in the Russo-Japanese War of this love of procrastination, and were all three determined not to put up with it again. We decided to make a joint protest to the officers of the General Staff, and, unless we obtained a satisfactory reply, to leave Constantinople and to abandon our mission. This joint *démarche*

had the desired effect. The War Office realised that it was alienating the English Press, and gave us a definite assurance that we should leave for the front as soon as the Commander-in-Chief of the army of Thrace, Abdullah Pasha, had started himself.

Meanwhile the Code of Regulations was drawn up, and we were all asked to sign a document undertaking to remain with the army until the end of the war. This seemed rather hard on us, and we pointed out to Colonel Izzet that our papers might wish to recall us and that the South African War had lasted no fewer than three years.

Colonel Izzet reassured our minds on this point in his own inimitable manner. He said: "Do not worry, we have made this regulation in order to discourage too many correspondents from going to the front; we do not wish to have people remain up there for a few days and then to hurry back to give away our military secrets. But rest assured, any time you wish to leave you have only to say you are ill, and you will find our doctors very lenient, more especially as I shall be the doctor to decide if your state of health warrants your leaving the army."

The next point we raised was the all-important one of the censorship of telegrams and letters from the front. The Regulations prescribed that all telegrams must be sent in French, if they were to pass over the military wire to Constantinople. We pointed out that this was a distinct hardship on the English war correspondents, many of whom possessed a most rudimentary knowledge of that language, and but few of whom could profess to write it with any attempt at accuracy.

The kind-hearted Colonel Izzet promised to try to obtain an English operator who could handle our despatches, and thus place us on an equal footing with our French colleagues. But this promise was never carried out, and

what is more, as the sequel will show, the Headquarters Staff even failed to provide a French operator, and when we reached the front we were politely informed that all our messages must be sent in Turkish.

This was the initial source of all the bitter quarrels between the correspondents and the authorities, for it is easy to imagine the value a despatch would be to a paper, which was first translated into bad French, then from French into Turkish, and then back again into French, and finally from French once more into English.

Finally, nearly all the outstanding questions were settled or left in abeyance, and in accordance with the demand of the War Office we were each asked to subscribe our signatures to a document in which we promised to remain with the army until the termination of the war, and also promised not to enter the territory of any of the belligerents engaged in hostilities with Turkey. Lionel James, Donohoe and myself, however, were too old at the game to give away our freedom without the certainty of corresponding facilities with which to carry on our work, and we each signed a document drawn up on much the same lines, which allowed many loopholes of escape.

But even after all the formalities had been complied with, the authorities were in no hurry to hand over our passes, as they feared we would disperse and make for the front on our own account. We were told that a day would be fixed for our departure, and that we would all be sent north together in a special train with our horses and baggage. We waited patiently for this day, which was a long time in coming.

Meanwhile Colonel Izzet, who was sincerely anxious to assist Lionel James, Donohoe and myself in any way in his power, proposed that we should take into our employment a special agent well-known to the Headquarters Staff, who would accompany us everywhere and act as interpreter, so

that we could enjoy a measure of freedom greater than if we were tied up all the time with thirty odd other correspondents. This gentleman waited on us at the hotel, and we discovered that he was a police spy who was being fastened on to us to watch our every movement and to make reports to the Staff on our daily deportment. Even at this stage the Headquarters had gained an inkling as to who would probably be the dangerous ones on the campaign, and it was hoped to checkmate any attempt we might make to bring off a *coup* by this means. As this gentleman could not speak one single word of English or French, he was of absolutely no value as an interpreter, and therefore we politely, but firmly declined to take him into our service, more especially as we were expected to pay him for spying on us.

It was a week after the declaration of war, on October 16th, that Abdullah, the Commander-in-Chief of the army of Thrace, left for the front. We, however, were destined to enjoy a fuller measure of Oriental procrastination. On Wednesday, October 16th, we were all asked to attend at the War Office in order that a photograph might be taken of us in one large group for the Minister of War to keep as a souvenir. I expect he is not so keen on having it in his office now.

We were then informed that the special train would be ready for us on Friday, and we broke up like a crowd of happy schoolboys dispersing for the summer holidays at this good news. Friday came and we were told we must wait until Saturday, as the railway authorities could not find a spare train. On Saturday there was a further postponement. On Friday I had an interview with the aged Kiamil Pasha at his private house. He struck me as being a very shrewd old man with a distinct liking at this time for the English. He told me how he hoped

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

NAZIM PASHA, MINISTER FOR WAR, LEAVING THE SUBLIME PORTE ON THE EVE OF HOSTILITIES.

Turkey would retain the friendship of England throughout the war.

There were rumours at this time that Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha would shortly resign, or be driven from the Grand Vizierate, and that Kiamil Pasha would replace him. In consequence the old man's ante-room was packed with a crowd of political followers and office seekers, who were hoping for places as soon as the expected change should be made. On Saturday we were told that there would be a further postponement. I spoke to Kiamil on the subject of our departure for the front, and he promised to see the Minister of War, Nazim Pasha, after the council on the following day, and to urge on him the necessity of allowing us to leave without further delay. On Saturday we were informed we must wait for a few days longer.

By this time we were almost in despair, as the fighting had already commenced round Kirk Kilisse and at any moment we expected to hear the news of a decisive battle. That afternoon I went and called on the Minister of War, Nazim Pasha, who received me in his room at the War Office. He gave me a definite assurance that we should start on Monday, and I hurried back to the Pera Palace Hotel to communicate the glad tidings to my friends. Monday came, but no permission, and we made further protests at the War Office, threatening to leave Constantinople and to join one of the armies of the Balkan States, if we were detained longer.

This had a decisive effect. That very evening Colonel Izzet came to the hotel, and told us that everything had been arranged at last, and that we were to be at the Cirkidje Station at half past four in the afternoon of Wednesday, October 23rd, to leave for Kirk Kilisse.

Meanwhile I had been seized with a violent attack of fever and influenza and was obliged to stay in bed, but

hoped to be well enough to leave with the others on the appointed day. On Tuesday evening my temperature was still high and I was in no condition to start, much to my mortification. In these circumstances I decided to send on my brother with all our horses, servants, stores, and camp equipment, and to follow myself in the motor-car as soon as I was well enough. I will, therefore, leave him in due course to tell the story of his departure from Constantinople, and of the adventures which befell him *en route* to Chorlou, but before doing so it will be well at this point to give a brief account of the disposition and organisation of the Turkish armies at the outbreak of war, and of the early operations which led up to the final disaster of Lule Burgas.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARLY OPERATIONS

At the outbreak of the war the Ottoman forces in European Turkey were widely scattered and hopelessly disorganised. It was the intention of the general staff, had they been given sufficient time by the Balkan Coalition, to form four armies, namely: No. 1, the Grand Army of Thrace; No. 2, the Army of the River Struma, concentrating at Serres; No. 3, the Army of the River Vodena, point of concentration Uskub; No. 4, the Army of Thessaly, point of concentration Elassona.

I am only concerned in this book with the operations of the Grand Army of Thrace, and I shall say nothing further of the fate of the other three armies, except that they existed only on paper and in the imagination of the Headquarters Staff. They were never organised; the machinery for forming them was non-existent; they were devoid of transport and short of artillery. They were little more than hordes of undisciplined men, short of officers, badly commanded and incapable of either taking the offensive or even of holding a strong defensive position. All three were in turn defeated and broken up by the Servians, Montenegrins, and Greeks.

The Turks had a pre-arranged plan of campaign which they were never destined to carry out. It was based on the mis-

taken assumption, which the Turks in their self-pride and contempt for the Balkan States could never get out of their heads, that neither Bulgaria, Servia, Greece, nor Montenegro would ever dare take the offensive against the Ottoman Empire, but would remain quietly behind their frontiers until the Turkish troops were mobilised, concentrated and in a position to attack them. The Turks rightly considered that a success against Bulgaria, in Thrace, would be decisive throughout the whole theatre of war, and that, once the Bulgarians were decisively defeated, the whole coalition would collapse like a pack of cards. Therefore, from the first, their main efforts were devoted to mobilising a powerful Field Army for the invasion of Bulgaria under cover of the fortress of Adrianople.

The confidence of the Turks was amazing. I had an interview with Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War, a few days after the outbreak of hostilities, and he expressed his utmost confidence as to the result of the campaign. He said, "We have only two months' more good weather for fighting, as it is too cold in the Balkans for winter operations, but that should give us ample time to cross the frontier and take Sofia."

Shortly afterwards, when bidding farewell to some officers who were leaving to join their regiments, Nazim addressed them as follows: "Farewell, my comrades. Do not forget to take with you your full-dress uniforms, because you will need them for the grand entry into Sofia two months from now."

These words sound rather funny in the fuller knowledge of the subsequent *débâcle*. But did Nazim really believe what he was saying, or was he merely talking to keep up the spirits of the troops, and to put a bold face on what he knew to be a critical situation? I heard, both before and after the battle of Lule Burgas, that he had

warned the Sublime Porte in the strongest language that it would be hopeless to take the offensive in the present state of the army; that it was inviting disaster to attempt to concentrate on the line Adrianople–Kirk Kilisse, and that the only safe plan of campaign would be to sit behind the lines of Chataldja until the army had been reorganised and the picked troops brought up from Smyrna, Trebizond, and other parts of Asia Minor.

At the same interview I had with Nazim he assured me that he himself would personally command the army of Thrace. Yet, a few days later, Abdullah was sent to fill this thankless position and remained in command until the flight from Lule Burgas to Chataldja, when he was removed, or voluntarily resigned, I do not know which.

I have always had a strong suspicion that Nazim, anticipating a disaster which could not be prevented, purposely refrained from assuming the command at the start of the campaign in order that he might escape the odium attaching to defeat. Whether this surmise is true or not, the fact remains that Nazim, even after one of the most crushing disasters in military history, did not resign his position as Minister of War. He not only retained it, but also took personal command of the army at Chataldja, thus gaining the prestige of having repulsed the Bulgarian attack on the famous lines.

Although the Turkish Headquarters Staff never seem to have grasped the extent of Bulgaria's preparations for war and her ability to take the offensive long before the Turkish armies were in a position to offer any sustained resistance, they nevertheless had anticipated that some Bulgarian divisions might cross the frontier by forcing the Mustafa Pasha Pass. But they did not regard such a move very seriously, firmly believing that it must come to a full stop in front of Adrianople, which fortress they regarded as quite

impregnable and capable of holding its own for a long time even although faced with a regular siege.

Their confidence in the ability of Adrianople to hold out has been justified by future events. What they entirely failed to grasp was the ability of the Bulgarians to mask Adrianople and to concentrate the bulk of their forces south of it, and to fight a decisive battle with the fortress garrisoned by more than fifty thousand of picked Turkish troops in their rear.

This certainly did appear to be an extremely hazardous undertaking, and few military critics believed before the war started that the Bulgarians would invade Thrace, attack the Turkish main army, and actually advance on Constantinople without first reducing Adrianople. But then the Bulgarian General Staff knew to the last letter the utter state of demoralisation and disorganisation prevailing in the army of Thrace, and their daring plan justified its conception by the rapidity and certainty of its execution.

At this stage it will be as well to give a brief summary of the respective strengths of the Turkish forces and those of the Allies. According to General Von Bernhardi, the nominal strength of the Turkish army in time of peace is 275,000 men. The actual strength of the Nizam, or regular army, in 1910 was as follows :—

Infantry	133,000
Cavalry	26,000
Artillery	43,000
Engineers	4,500
Special Troops (Sultan's Guards, &c.)	7,500
Commissariat	3,000
Various	3,000
Total	220,000

In addition to these there were 25,000 men in the permanent Cadres, into which the Redifs are incorporated

when mobilised, and 30,000 regular and reserve officers, a total of 275,000 officers and men.

The war strength of the Turkish Army is nominally 700,000 men, which includes troops in Europe, Armenia, Anatolia, and Syria. Owing to the lack of railways, the general incapacity of the Turks for organisation, and the necessity of maintaining strong garrisons in the various disturbed districts of the Empire, probably not half this number could ever be concentrated in European Turkey in time of war, and not more than 300,000 ever reached Constantinople in time to take part in the present struggle.

In addition to the regular army and Redif reserves there is the levy *en masse* (Mustafiz), consisting for the most part of old and non-effective men, who could only be utilised for the purposes of local defence and policing. Liability for service begins at the age of 20 and lasts for twenty years; nine years in the Nizam, followed by nine in the Redif and two in the Mustafiz. The organisation of the Turkish army is by Army Corps.

3 Divisions	equal	1 Army Corps (war strength about 50,000).
3 Brigades	„	1 Division (18,000 men).
3 Regiments	„	1 Brigade (6,000 men).
1 Regiment	„	3 Battalions (2,000 men).

The Grand Army of Thrace, which should have been concentrated between Adrianople and Kirk Kilisse at the outbreak of hostilities, ready to take the offensive or to meet the attack of the Bulgarians, was, in point of fact, hopelessly scattered and some of its regular units were never brought together in time to take part in the battle of Lule Burgas.

The lack of these trained battalions was largely responsible for the crushing nature of that disaster. The Army Corps had to be brought up to war strength, which they never actually reached, by the incorporation of large numbers of

Reservists, and by the addition of ill-trained Redif Divisions. The Grand Army of Thrace consisted of four Army Corps, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th.

At the outbreak of hostilities the 1st Corps, under Yavir Pasha, was split up as follows. The 1st and 2nd Divisions were in Adrianople, forming part of the garrison of that fortress, and the 3rd Division was in Smyrna, where it had been sent during the war with Italy to meet a possible descent of the Italians on the coast.

The 2nd Army Corps, under Shefket Torgut Pasha, was also split up. The 4th Division was between Rodosto and Adrianople; the 5th at the Dardanelles, and the 6th at Smyrna.

The 3rd Army Corps, which was placed under the command of Mahmoud Mukhtar, was concentrated round Kirk Kilisse.

The 4th Army Corps, under the command of Abouk Pasha, was partly in garrison at Adrianople, and during the campaign one of its Divisions remained in the fortress and the other two formed part of the Field Army routed at Lule Burgas.

Neither of the Divisions stationed at Smyrna reached Thrace in time to take part in the campaign, as they did not arrive at the front until the army fell back on the lines of Chataldja. Their place was taken by Redif Divisions, which in discipline, training, and military spirit could not compare with the regular army.

According to the same authority, General Von Bernhardi, Bulgaria, with a population of 4,000,000, has an army the peace strength of which is 59,820 officers and men, and the war strength 330,000, of which 230,000 are infantry and only 6,500 cavalry. The actual number of men in the artillery and commissariat trains is not known, but the army possesses 884 field and siege guns and 232 machine guns. With the

auxiliary troops formed of men between the ages of forty-one and forty-six, which could be employed in garrisoning fortresses, or on the lines of communication, the total strength of the army could be raised to 400,000 men.

Servia, with a population of three millions, has an army 28,000 strong in time of peace, but this number is seldom reached, and sinks in winter to only 10,000 men. The war effective strength of the army is 250,000, of whom 165,000 are infantry, 5,500 cavalry, and the rest artillery, transport, etc. The Servian army possesses 432 field and mountain guns (108 batteries of four guns each). In addition, six siege batteries of six guns each and 228 machine guns. With third class reservists the total strength of the army could be raised to 300,000 men.

Greece, with a population of 2,600,000, has an army which in time of war can be brought up to 100,000 men.

Montenegro, with a population of only 250,000, can place 45,000 men in the field, of whom 4,000 are mounted. There are in addition 11 reserve battalions only fit for service on the lines of communication. There are 104 field and 44 machine guns.

I shall not relate in detail the extraordinary rumours in circulation in Constantinople during those weary days when we were still awaiting permission to leave for the front; neither will I give in detail the appalling amount of false information served out by the Headquarters Staff to the Turkish Press in order to calm the public, and to bluff Europe into believing that all was going well with Ottoman arms.

The daring of these senseless fabrications beats anything ever attempted before in war. We were told of the bombardment of Varna and of the dispatch of a Turkish army thither to invade Bulgarian soil in order to cause a diversion and force some of the enemy's troops to leave the neighbourhood

of Mustafa Pasha. We were told of the dispatch of an entire Army Corps to Media, in the Black Sea, under Mahmoud Mukhtar Pasha, which was to form behind the Istrandza Mountains and to act on the right flank of the main army. Then came successive victories over the Servians at Kumanova, the rout of the Greeks near Elassona, the total disruption of the Montenegrin army and finally the successful invasion of Bulgarian territory through the pass of Mustafa Pasha.

Finally, it became the fervent wish of every war correspondent in Constantinople to leave for the front at the very first opportunity, so that he might pass from the realm of fictitious rumour, which hovered over the city like a dense mist, into the realm of facts which he might see with his own eyes. To have remained in Constantinople much longer would have driven earnest seekers after truth almost to despair, as it was utterly impossible to trust any of the official or unofficial news which circulated hour after hour throughout the town. The Turks kept up the bluff right to the last minute, and the Sultan issued a proclamation to his armies ordering them to take the offensive everywhere against "Our little neighbours, Greece, Montenegro, Servia, and Bulgaria."

The veil was suddenly lifted from all these doubts and uncertainties in the most dramatic manner on Friday, October 25th. On that morning rumours began to circulate throughout the town that Kirk Kilisse had been captured by the Bulgarians and that a Turkish Cavalry Division under Prince Aziz had been almost entirely destroyed. The day will be known in future as Black Friday, because for the first time the authorities made no effort to conceal the truth and published an official account which, of course, minimised the full extent of the disaster, but which nevertheless did not attempt to deny the main facts.

Constantinople was profoundly stirred by the bad news from all parts of the theatre of war, and the feeling of the public was akin to that of the British people on receiving the news of the successive reverses of Colenso, Stormberg, and Magersfontein in a single week. The capture of Kirk Kilisse and the retirement of the Army of Thrace on Baba Eski and Lule Burgas; the defeat of Zekki Pasha's army at Kumanovo, after his reported victory over the Servians three days previously, and the advance of the Greek Army on Classo came as a complete surprise to the Turkish public.

To crown these misfortunes, reports came to hand that the Albanians were wavering in their allegiance, no doubt influenced by the adverse turn events were taking against Ottoman arms. They delivered the following ultimatum :— "We are tired of the war and of the perpetual disturbances in our country. We do not wish anyone to fight over our lands, and unless we are guaranteed peace and liberty we will call upon Austria to come to our assistance."

I received confirmation of these reports in a most dramatic and unexpected manner. I have already mentioned that my brother had left for the front with the other correspondents two days before, on Wednesday, October 23rd, and that I had been detained at the Pera Palace Hotel owing to an attack of influenza. I was upstairs in my room making preparations to leave for the front on the following day, when there came a knock at the door and a very much travel-stained individual entered the room, and handed me a dirty envelope. I tore this open and found three messages, one from my brother, addressed to myself; one in code from Lionel James, addressed to Mr. Graves, *The Times* correspondent in Constantinople; and the third addressed by Donohoe to Dr. Sadler, the correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*.

My brother's message was as follows: "We arrived at Seidler on Thursday morning, after spending all night in the train. Owing to a railway accident, a train having gone off the line, it was necessary to wait until the evening. It appears that the Turkish population are in a state of panic, owing to King Ferdinand's proclamation declaring a war of the Cross against the Crescent. The trains returning from the neighbourhood of Burgas are filled with women and children who have lost everything. There are large numbers of them, and even the roofs of the railway carriages are crowded. During the night we were ordered to retire on Chorlou. It is rumoured the Bulgarians have crossed the frontier, have defeated the Turks, and have taken Kirk Kilisse. I am sending this down by the engine driver, who has promised to deliver it to you."

I sent for my interpreter and talked to the engine driver, who had no very clear idea as to what had happened, except that the Turks had undoubtedly suffered defeat.

These were the first messages sent by correspondents from the front in the course of the campaign.

That evening Colonel Izzet came in to see me, in order to make some final preparations, as I was to leave for the front by motor car on the following morning. I was anxious to see how he took the news of the disasters and how he reconciled them with all the reports he had been persistently circulating of Turkish successes everywhere.

The gallant Colonel, who suffered, up to the time of the *débâcle* of Lule Burgas, from a persistent optimism, which nothing could check, addressed me in the following strain:—

"Naturally, we are disappointed at the news from the front, and of our retirement from Kirk Kilisse, but in reality, what is our position? We are now concentrated on the very ground previously decided for the concentration of the Army of Thrace, as laid down by Field-Marshal von der Goltz and

our own strategists. Even if Adrianople were to fall into the enemy's hands, it would make not the smallest difference to our originally-formed plan of campaign, which is to concentrate all our forces, and then gradually force the Bulgarians back across the Balkans. Had our precautions on the frontier met with success, it would have been gratifying, but, contrary to our expectations, as it is, they have had the effect of delaying the enemy's advance, and of giving time to our troops to concentrate.

"It must be remembered under what difficulties the Turks commenced this campaign. In their earnest desire to preserve peace, they delayed their concentration until the very last minute compatible with their national safety, although they knew Bulgaria was fully prepared for war. The men, munitions, and provisions had to be brought long distances from widely-scattered districts of the Empire, and the Balkan Coalition, therefore, possessed every strategical advantage at the start of the campaign. The delay in the Bulgarian offensive caused a sudden change from pessimism to optimism, which has led to temporary discomfiture, because the sound plans of the recognised masters of strategy were temporarily abandoned. But the check will have a wholesome effect, because it will at once cause the spirit of contempt for our little neighbours to give way to a truer appreciation of their fighting capacities."

Before I relate in detail the strange adventures which befel me on my journey to the front and during the battle of Lule Burgas, I will give a *résumé* of the opening operations of the campaign which led to the capture of Kirk Kilisse and to the failure of the Turkish plan of campaign, which was to concentrate the whole of the Grand Army of Thrace along the line Adrianople–Kirk Kilisse.

The battle must be considered as a whole with the operations which commenced with the capture of Kirk Kilisse

on the night of October 22nd and morning of October 23rd. Kirk Kilisse was held by a portion of the garrison of Adrianople, in no great force, although it was the right of the base of operations against Bulgaria, and contained large accumulations of food, ammunition, and supplies. The garrison were totally inadequate to withstand the shock of the Bulgarian troops, and the mobilisation of the Army of Thrace was so behindhand that no force was ready to be pushed forward to its support.

The original Turkish plan of campaign was to concentrate the whole of the Army of Thrace, under the command of Abdullah Pasha, along the line Adrianople–Kirk Kilisse, where its left flank would be protected by the fortress of Adrianople—from which it could draw its supplies—and at the same time the right of the army would rest on Kirk Kilisse, and would be covered by the Istrandza mountains, behind which it was proposed to form an army under Mahmoud Mukhtar, landed at Midia, on the Black Sea, and having that port as its base.

This was doubtless a sound plan of campaign, and the natural one in the circumstances, always supposing that the mobilisation of the Army of Thrace could be completed either before or at approximately the same date as that of the Bulgarians. If the mobilisation were delayed even for a few days, it would at once become the most dangerous plan of campaign that could possibly be chosen, because the various corps arriving one after another on the line Adrianople–Kirk Kilisse would render themselves liable to be attacked and destroyed in detail, should the enemy take the offensive in force.

This is exactly what happened, and the failure of the Turkish General Staff to grasp the time-honoured axiom of war—that an army must be concentrated before battle—is responsible for the crushing disaster which has over-

whelmed Turkey. At the outbreak of war the Turkish troops were hopelessly scattered throughout Macedonia, Albania, on the Greek frontier, in the Yemen, in Asia Minor, and Tripoli, and from the very commencement it became obvious that, as the conditions on which the plan of campaign were originally based were no longer normal, it would be quite impossible to mobilise the Army of Thrace within the period calculated for that purpose by Von der Goltz and his German advisers.

It is extremely doubtful, even if the conditions had been normal, whether the Army of Thrace could have been mobilised and concentrated in time to meet the first shock of the Bulgarian advance. Everything essential to a rapid mobilisation was lacking. There was no efficient railway organisation for transporting troops; no commissariat for the Army Corps once they left the line of the railway; no adequate supplies of food and ammunition; no hospital arrangements of any sort; and, even if the material had been at hand, there was no trained staff capable of handling an army of more than 100,000 men.

Therefore, it may well be asked, Why did the Turkish General Staff proceed with a plan of campaign which, according to the generally accepted maxims of war, seemed to play right into the enemy's hands and to invite certain disaster?

I think the answer is to be found in the utter lack of all knowledge of strategy in Turkish military circles; their entire failure to grasp the true significance of Bulgaria's twenty-five years of steady preparation for war; and, above all, in the overwhelming self-confidence and conceit of the Turkish character which caused them to despise all infidels, and more especially the Balkan States, until the *débâcle* of Lule Burgas finally opened their eyes to their own inefficiencies. The Turks never believed that the Bulgarians

could, or would, dare to take the offensive against the Ottoman Empire, and they seemed to think that the Czar Ferdinand's legions would quietly sit still behind the Balkans, scared to death, until the Turkish concentration was completed, and an offensive campaign begun.

This, then, was their state of mind when the startling intelligence became known in Constantinople, on October 23rd, that Kirk Kilisse had been captured, its garrison routed and put to hopeless flight. But even then the true significance of the disaster does not seem to have dawned on them, and no steps were taken to avoid a still greater one.

It is obvious that, the moment the General Staff became aware of the Bulgarian forward movement on a vast scale, it was hopeless for them to attempt to concentrate so close to the hostile frontier as the line Adrianople–Kirk Kilisse, and, therefore, the only sound course would have been to order the immediate retirement of the advanced corps to some strong central position, where they could have entrenched themselves and waited, until the rest of the army had come into line.

The most natural position would seem to be that between Baba Eski and Lule Burgas, where the army could protect the line of the railway, and at the same time draw its food and supplies. In view of the utter disorganisation which, it has since been proved, prevailed everywhere, the still sounder course would have been immediately to order the retirement of the whole army behind the lines of Chataldja, where it finds itself at this hour. But I suppose the military authorities did not dare make this confession of failure, and preferred to run still greater risks than admit defeat.

At any rate, the original plan of a concentration between Adrianople and Kirk Kilisse was proceeded with, and I will now relate the sequence of events which brought

about its failure and which led to the utter disruption of the Army of Thrace.

At the time of the defeat of the garrison of Kirk Kilisse three Turkish Army Corps, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, were being mobilised and gradually pushed to the front. The 1st Army, under Yavir Pasha, was the most forward, and its three divisions, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, were echeloned between Kavakli, south-west of Kirk Kilisse, and Jenidze, about six kilometres further north-west. On October 24th and 25th the three divisions of the 1st Corps—the Constantinople troops, and considered one of the crack corps—were attacked and beaten in detail by the Bulgarians who had been victorious at Kirk Kilisse. The 1st Corps was completely broken up, practically all its artillery being captured, and the remnants fled in confusion to Baba Eski.

While this disaster was taking place the 3rd Corps, under Mahmoud Mukhtar, was at Bunar Hissar, where it was also attacked by a portion of the Bulgarian army. There was some fighting, but the utter rout of the 1st Army Corps, which exposed his left flank, forced Mahmoud Mukhtar to retire on Viza, which he reached safely.

Even this second crushing disaster failed to bring wisdom to the Turkish General Staff, and, instead of a general concentration being ordered of all the corps farther south, troops were pushed to the front, and an effort was made to concentrate the army between Lule Burgas and Karagac.

Thus, when the battle of Lule Burgas opened on Monday, October 28th, the position was this:—The 4th Corps, under Abouk Pasha, but not up to its full strength, was in and around Lule Burgas. The remnants of the 1st Corps, which had been routed on the 24th and 25th, had been hastily collected and brought into line, but without guns, as practically all had been lost; the 2nd Corps, under Shefket Torgut, had come up on the right, and was between Turk-

Bey and Karagac; whilst the 3rd Corps, under Mahmoud Mukhtar, was still a long way to the rear at Viza.

It will thus be seen that Abdullah's army was in a hopeless state of confusion and demoralisation before the battle began, whilst, on the other hand, the Bulgarians were flushed with two great successes.

In addition, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief was taken completely by surprise, which is proved by the fact that, when I saw him at dawn on Monday, October 28th, he told me he had no immediate intention of proceeding to the front, and yet later in the day he hastily departed for Sakiskeuy with his staff, without even having time to forward his personal baggage, and was thus left for two days without food or spare clothes. I have since learnt that such was the confusion amongst the corps, that many of the men never reached their proper divisions, but were hastily snatched up by other commanders and hurried to the fighting-line.

As soon as the men were brought up by rail they were dumped down, given vague instructions, and expected to find their proper commands; and when the battle opened many regiments were wandering about hopelessly lost. Thus some of the 4th Corps fought with the 2nd, and some of the 1st with the 4th, which naturally added to the general demoralisation.

CHAPTER VIII

DEPARTURE OF THE CORRESPONDENTS FOR THE FRONT

We left Constantinople at seven o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, October 23rd, for Kirk Kilisse, the headquarters of the right wing of the Turkish Army of Thrace commanded by Abdullah Pasha.

The train was due to start at 4 o'clock, and by 2 p.m. a small army of fifty dragomen and servants, eighty horses, and as much baggage as would have sufficed for a Turkish army corps, had arrived at the station. It was raining hard, and when I went down to see the horses entrained I found the utmost confusion prevailing. The station yard was blocked by a medley of carts and horses, the latter kicking and plunging about in the mud, refusing to be led into the open cattle trucks which were provided for their accommodation. The voluble Greek dragomen added to the confusion by shouting and abusing each other and everyone in general, as is their wont, but finally, by some miracle, horses, baggage, and servants were bundled into the trucks.

Meanwhile some thirty-two correspondents, photographers, and cinematograph operators, representing almost every European nationality, had assembled on the station platform. Their costumes were varied, some of them grotesque. One cadaverous Frenchman, who arrived mounted on an

emaciated cab horse, decked out with an abnormal quantity of obsolete saddle-bags, revolvers, waterbottles, filters, etc., was at once christened Don Quixote, and an obese German, who followed him, was nick-named Sancho Panza.

The correspondent of the *Kreuz-Zeitung* wore the largest sombrero that it has ever been my lot to see, with one side looped up after the manner of Roosevelt's Roughriders, or of the C.I.V. As it rains continually at this season, I imagine that he must have intended to use it as an umbrella.

We had to wait three hours at the station, but there was so much incident that the wait did not seem dull. A number of Turkish infantry had stacked their rifles and were squatting about on the platforms waiting to entrain. Two of them had pulled out rustic pipes, and were playing a monotonous wailing melody, while a dozen other rough-bearded soldiers danced a slow measure round and round in a circle, waving their arms in rhythm with the music.

Later on, a regiment marched into the station with its band playing, while the crowd pressed round clapping and cheering. We were allotted carriages in the same train as this regiment. A number of the correspondents' friends, among whom were several ladies, and a number of Turkish officers had come to bid us farewell. Everyone was in the best of spirits at getting away from Constantinople at last, after the weeks of tedious waiting and uncertainty.

The Turkish officers assured us that they would join us in a few days, and invited us to dine with them in Sofia, and other equally unlikely places. I don't think that anyone had an idea of how quickly disaster was destined to overtake the Turkish Army, or of how, within a few weeks, most of these fine soldiers who were being despatched to the front daily would have either been killed on the battle-field, or have perished of disease by the roadside, uncared for and unmourned.

Hundreds of people had gathered along the railway line to cheer and burn torches and fireworks as the train steamed out through the shadowy suburbs of Stamboul, while a tuneless brass band was playing in an open truck.

A few miles outside Constantinople we had a first glimpse of the realities of war when we were halted in a siding, while a train-load of badly-wounded men on its way back from the front crawled slowly by. By the light of the carriage lamps we could see the men lying about on the floors and seats of the carriages in varying attitudes of suffering. One young officer, his clothes soaked in blood, lay pale and rigid on the floor of a first-class carriage. He had died of his wounds during the journey.

A little farther on we passed a train-load of refugees flying from Adrianople and the surrounding villages. Women and children were packed in first-class carriages or cattle-trucks, with the wreck of their homes scattered in confusion around them.

I shared a second-class carriage with Lionel James of *The Times*, and Martin Donohoe of the *Chronicle*, both of whom afterwards became my constant companions. Having had some experience of Turkish methods, we had brought provisions for four days in the carriage with us, although we were due at Kirk Kilisse on the following day at noon. We ate an impromptu supper of sardines and tongue and cocoa, which we boiled over a portable spirit lamp, and then, worn out by a fortnight of procrastination and preparations in Constantinople, settled down to sleep as best we could in the railway carriage, which was crowded with our camp equipment.

Few things are more ghastly than dawn in a railway carriage. If you have the window open at night the draught becomes intolerable, and if it is shut one awakes in an atmosphere sodden and fœtid. It is bad enough in a sleeper on

the Orient Express, but here, in a second-class Turkish railway carriage *en route* for the front, it was infinitely worse.

A large measure of our first enthusiasm evaporated when we awoke in the morning and found ourselves halted at the little wayside station of Seidler, twenty miles from Lule Burgas, and on the main line to Adrianople. There were no signs of a village, only a few station buildings, while as far as the eye could see stretched a brown and barren plain like the South African veldt. It was raining hard, and in the grey light of dawn the landscape looked indescribably desolate.

We were told that we should have to wait two or three hours to allow train-loads of wounded men to pass, so, stiff and tired, we turned out to refresh ourselves by a wash under the station pump.

Towards noon we sighted a long line of wagons and people on foot winding across the hills from the direction of Lule Burgas. At first we thought that it was an army in retreat, but after a time we could make out that they were women and children, tramping across country with all their worldly goods packed in bullock-wagons. They went bare-footed for the most part, and in places had to wade up to their knees through mud and water.

One pretty little dark-eyed girl was riding astride on an ox, and other little children were urging on the patient bullocks with their goads. An old man who was limping down the road, moaning as he went, told me that the Bulgarians had captured Kirk Kilisse, and that the villages were in flames. Then he shook his fist towards the north and swore a vengeance that he could never hope to take.

We were told that we should be taken back to Chorlou at once, but a train became derailed behind us and we were compelled to wait until the line could be repaired.

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

REFUGEES' TRAIN OVERTURNED AT SEIDLER.

All day long an endless line of refugees wound across the plain, and towards evening a train arrived from Burgas with women and children clinging to the front of the engine and the tops of the railway carriages.

King Ferdinand's proclamation of a crusade of the Cross against the Crescent had spread a panic among the Turkish population. As it grew dark the panic increased, and women and children came staggering across the fields panting and dishevelled. Among them was a number of Turkish soldiers who had become involved in the flight. The soldiers were starving, and when some of the officers in our train remonstrated with them, saying that if they did not return to the front they would be shot, they replied, "We would rather be shot than return there to be starved to death."

As night set in the confusion increased. On all hands one heard the lowing of oxen, the cries of children, and a babble of angry voices raised in dispute. The officers accompanying us asked us to remain in our carriage, as the sight of Christians would hardly be welcome to those poor people, who had lost everything, and who, in their ignorance, knew only distinction of creed and not of race.

The Turkish army had suffered its first reverse and the fortified town of Kirk Kilisse, headquarters of the right wing of the army, had been captured by the Bulgarians at the point of the bayonet at midnight on Wednesday.

I gathered all the details that I could, and wrote out a hasty despatch describing the capture of Kirk Kilisse, and our own adventures. This despatch I addressed,

"Pera Palace,
Room 60,"

which was the number of my brother's room, and gave the Greek engine driver of one of the down trains a sovereign to deliver it to the porter at the Pera Palace Hotel. I did

not care to put my brother's name on the letter, as I thought we might get into trouble from the authorities, if the Greek engine driver betrayed us. The letter was, I afterwards heard, delivered to my brother on the following day, and enabled him to send the first authoritative account of the capture of Kirk Kilisse.

By 10.30 on Thursday night the line in our rear had been cleared and we were able to return to Chorlou, some 20 miles in the rear, arriving at dawn on Friday. Even there the station and all its approaches were crowded with refugees. We gave bread to some of them and they went down on their knees to thank us.

At about 7 o'clock we detrained, and the general scramble for the few bullock-wagons available to carry our stores and equipment to the camping ground afforded an interesting example of the enterprising nature of war correspondents. There were further interesting, but rather expensive examples when it came to sorting out the baggage.

Then the horses were detrained and freely manifested the resentment that they felt at two days' imprisonment in cattle trucks.

The stout German correspondent, whom we had nicknamed Sancho Panza, was soon afterwards seen disappearing in the distance in pursuit of his two saddle horses, which were making for Adrianople at full gallop.

When we reached the camping ground there was another undignified scramble for the best spots in which to pitch the tents, in which the halfpenny papers rather worsted their more dignified penny colleagues.

We were camped in a pleasant valley with high tablelands all round us. That evening I sat in my tent in the hour of shadows. It was a beautiful evening, peaceful as the summer-time in England. In front were the horse lines, and beyond them lay the white road, along which wound an

endless train of refugees flying blindly toward Stamboul—that mirage city of prosperity—from before the crusaders of the twentieth century. As evening fell a crimson glow spread over the hill and the road became veiled in purple shadows, until the long line of refugees looked like an army of phantoms. From over the hills came their flocks of sheep and goats, and the night was restless with the music of cattle-bells and the groaning of the heavy ox-wagons.

At Chorlou, which was the advance base for the left and centre of the Turkish Army, which was concentrated on the line Lule Burgas–Baba Eski–Viza, some 40 miles to the north-east, we had ample evidence of the activity of the Turkish preparations. Regiments were arriving at all hours, either by railway from Constantinople or by road from Rodosto on the Sea of Marmora, some 20 miles distant. From Chorlou they were hurriedly dispatched by rail and road to the front.

There was a complete lack of organisation. Regiments would arrive in the camp worn out and hungry after a long day's march, and instead of finding food and the shelter of a tent, would be left to spend the night without shelter in pelting rain and a bitter north-east wind. The nights were intensely cold, there being on several occasions 12–14 degrees of frost. There seemed to be an almost complete lack of food, or of any form of organised commissariat, and so the half-starved men were dying like flies of dysentery, pneumonia, and other diseases.

There was also a great shortage of officers, many regiments having only one to a double company.

In the course of a day's march about half the men in the regiment would fall out from sore feet, exhaustion, or disease. The utmost demoralisation and apathy prevailed among the men, and we had little doubt, after a few days spent at Chorlou, which would be the victorious army.

Our own position was not of the happiest. We were camped forty miles from the scene of the military operations, with armed sentries on guard night and day with orders to prevent us escaping, while our only news consisted of daily reports of Turkish victories, which were announced to us by the fatuous censor. We had been told before leaving Constantinople that all our despatches would have to be handed in in French, but when we got to Chorlou we found that there were no facilities of any kind for sending telegrams. We made a collective protest, and after twenty-four hours' delay were informed that we might send telegrams which were handed in in Turkish, of which language we were completely ignorant.

This rather limited the sphere of our usefulness, and we began to wonder what the editors would say when they saw the long tale of our fruitless expenditure. We were destined to spend three days in the camp at Chorlou, and during that time I had the opportunity of getting to know my fellow correspondents, and, with a few exceptions, I never hope to meet a nicer lot of fellows.

In one way only did they disappoint me. I had expected to meet a hardy band of buccaneers, trained in the ways of camp life, and inured to the hardships of war. Some of them, it is true, were experienced campaigners, but a great many had never been out of Fleet Street or seen a shot fired in anger in their lives. Several of them, even, had never been on a horse's back.

One correspondent in particular had reached an age which cannot have been far short of 40, without ever having exposed himself to the fearful hazard of the saddle. He had purchased the quietest steed that he could find in Constantinople, but when, on his trial run in the camp at Chorlou, the animal broke out into a spirited hackney trot, the correspondent felt his tenure of office so uncertain, that he hastily

dismounted in a none too dignified manner. After this he confided his horse to the care of a more experienced companion, with a request to so break it in that it should never go out of a walk. It was a jaded and dispirited animal, about the number of whose ribs there could be no possible doubt, and everyone who rode it had difficulty in getting it to go at anything faster than a walk, but, with the strange perversity of its kind, it indulged in the wildest affectation of activity directly the unfortunate one from Fleet Street got on to its back.

Finally he abandoned his horse and went everywhere on foot. How he managed it will ever be a puzzle to me, but he was always present where there was anything to be seen, and his energy appeared inexhaustible. I have ever since had a profound admiration for him, because he behaved in a most gallant manner, although I believe that from the first he found his unusual situation in the midst of a routed army both embarrassing and alarming.

Lionel James of *The Times*, and Martin Donohoe of the *Chronicle*, were my two best friends, and we had all three pitched our tents together in one corner of the camp. James, a charming companion, used to amuse himself by telling me horrible tales of the atrocities which the Turkish soldiers were likely to practise on me, in the event of their being defeated and getting out of hand. He entertained us very much by sitting in front of the tent and chanting erotic Hindoo songs in nasal monotonous tones, to the astonishment of the Turkish sentries. He was an experienced campaigner, having himself served in the army, while at present he commands a regiment of Yeomanry. In addition, he is a very able war correspondent, and in that capacity has taken part in numerous campaigns, including the South African and the Russo-Japanese wars.

Martin Donohoe, an Irish-Australian, is a journalist of

great experience, and is a most entertaining companion, having amusing stories to tell about every part of the world. In appearance he reminded me of the stout robber baron in Reinhardt's "Miracle" at Olympia. I am sure that in a more primitive state of existence he would have spent his time ravaging other people's lands and driving off their cattle, or in burning their castles and carrying off their wives across his saddle bow. Living in the twentieth century, he has turned his hand to the only legalised form of brigandage—the profession of a war correspondent. He is a large, rather stout man, with a round, reddish face and a bristling moustache. When one day he appeared wearing a black fur cap and a grey overcoat of military pattern, he looked so like a Bulgarian, that we were all afraid for his life.

He used to ride the most extraordinary horse that it has ever been my lot to see; such a horse as one sees portrayed in story books for children or in effigy in a toy-shop. It was a strongly-built animal, abnormally long in the barrel, with the sturdy foreshortened legs of a carthorse, which, however, tapered down to the hocks and hoofs of a thoroughbred racer. These legs, with an excess of affectation, it used to lift high in the air in an effort to imitate the exaggerated gait of a prize hackney. In addition, it had the head of a 'bus-horse, and the delicate, sensitive nostrils of an Arab. Donohoe used to ride a Turkish military saddle with a brass-capped back piece, underneath which was a sky-blue numnah cloth, with a red border, so that, later on, when he discarded his Bulgarian costume and adopted a fez and grew a beard, he looked for all the world like a Turkish Pasha, and inspired superlative respect among all the soldiers whom he encountered.

Among the other correspondents, I have particularly pleasant memories of Mr. Alan Ostler, the very able and energetic representative of the *Daily Express*, who had been

with the Turco-Arab forces in the deserts of Tripoli for more than a year. He had finally fallen a victim to typhoid fever, and had experienced all the horrors of a Turkish field hospital. He had been left alone in a tent with various other more or less moribund unfortunates, and was on the point of death when rescued by an English doctor. None the less, after six months of convalescence, he had volunteered for service in the present war.

On the whole the foreign correspondents were a very nice lot of fellows, although the Frenchmen were rather inclined to behave in a childish manner. They treated the censor, Major Vasfi, as though he had been their nurse, and were constantly gathering in a gesticulating mob round his tent to make what they described as a "*démarche collective.*" This generally meant that they had come to abuse him because one of them had lost his horse, or some of his baggage, or because another was cold and had not enough to eat. They tormented poor Major Vasfi almost to death, and on several occasions he came to my tent for a little peace, exclaiming, as he sank with a sigh of relief upon the camp bed, "But, Monsieur Ashmead-Bartlett, what would you? Am I their nurse? Can I look after their luggage, their horses, and their cold feet?"

Of the German correspondents, Baron von Kriegelstein and Major von Zweiter, I have nothing but pleasant memories. They were both brave and able gentlemen, but —in common with all the other foreign correspondents—they were hampered in the execution of their work by a lack of funds.

The two Russian correspondents were *persona ingratissima* with the Turks, who suspected Russia of having instigated the crusade of the Balkan States. To make matters worse, one of the correspondents was an officer of the Headquarters Staff in St. Petersburg, and the Turks insisted, not without

reason, that he had been sent by his Government to act as a spy. Feeling was very bitter against him, and he had been told by Izzet Bey before leaving Constantinople that he accompanied the army at his own risk, and I myself more than once heard Turkish officers express the wish that he might be found shot by the roadside. The limit was reached when he handed in his despatches to the Censor, addressed to the Russian Embassy in Constantinople. Then for the first time did Major Vasfi's habitual calm desert him, and he pointed out some unpleasant truths to Captain W——.

Personally, I liked the Russian, for he was a man of great experience and culture, and we went for several long forbidden rides together. Officially, the only exercise we were allowed was a tour, which took place daily after lunch, when we were expected to ride two and two behind a Turkish officer, like schoolgirls out with their mistress on the parade of some South Coast watering-place. Personally, I refused to take part in these rides after the first occasion, when the whole cavalcade of riders, good, bad —for the most part—and indifferent, clad in the most heterogeneous and ridiculous costumes I have ever seen, trotted back into camp led by a tiny stray donkey which had joined them during the ride. That donkey seemed so aptly to symbolise us and our fruitless mission at Chorlou.

The first day and night in the camp at Chorlou were pleasant enough, as the weather was warm and sunny, but on Saturday evening a bitter wind sprang up in the north-east and it became very cold. I found it impossible to keep warm even in a tent, and a few such nights as we experienced on Saturday would have proved fatal to the horses, unaccustomed as they were to the hardships of a campaign. Luckily, by a supreme and united effort, we succeeded in rousing the Censor from his habitual sluggishness and prevailed upon him to find stabling for the horses

in Chorlou, while we ourselves moved into houses in the village.

Major Vasfi, the Censor, was always very kind to me, I think chiefly because I was always polite to him, and for the sake of my father, who had been a life-long friend of Turkey. So, when on the morning of Monday, October 28th, we moved from our camp into the village of Chorlou, he went on ahead and obtained one of the best houses in the place for me.

It was a large wooden house with projecting bay windows on the upper floors, rather like the houses that were built in London in the seventeenth century. It belonged to a family of Greeks, and was kept remarkably clean. Two large wooden coach doors gave access to an atrium with a floor of earth and paving stones, which occupied the whole of the ground floor, and in which the family lived and performed all their household duties. The family consisted of an old bearded man, two old ladies, his daughters, and a young man, his grandson, and they seemed to spend most of their time squatting on the earthen floor in one corner of the hall, around a brazier of coals, smoking and drinking coffee.

Upstairs the rooms opened on to a hall, in the centre of which was a plain deal table on which we used to have our meals. In one corner a lamp was suspended above a photogravure of the Virgin Mary. It should, strictly speaking, have been kept burning continually, but the old ladies, being of an economical turn of mind, used only to light it at sunset, and put it out again when they went to bed. The rooms were large and airy, and the deal floors were scrubbed as white as snow, but they were bare of all furniture, save for divans arranged around the walls, upon which we used to sleep.

All this time I had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of my brother, of whom I had had no news since I left

him lying ill in the Pera Palace Hotel. On Monday afternoon, just as I had got installed in my house, Sir Bryan Leighton arrived from Constantinople in my brother's motor-car. He said that they had taken three days to cover the intervening 150 miles, owing to the absence of proper roads, and that the previous evening they had broken down 15 miles outside the town, and my brother and Ismet Bey, a young Turkish officer, had left the motor in order to walk on to Chorlou in search of assistance.

I began to wonder what had happened to them, as 24 hours had by now elapsed since they had left the motor-car. At first I thought that they must have taken the wrong road and gone some miles out of their way before discovering their mistake. But when on the following morning there was still no news, I began to think that my brother might have fallen ill again, or met with an accident by the roadside. At 10 a.m. on Tuesday, therefore, I visited the Censor and informed him officially that my brother and Ismet-bey were missing. Major Vasfi was very kind, promising to make all inquiries and to send a patrol out to search the roads.

Soon afterwards we heard the distant sound of guns to the north, and during the day the cannonade increased in violence, until, toward evening, it had deepened to a continual murmur of far-away thunder. The great battle that was to decide the fate of the Turkish Empire had started, but the Censor hardened his heart and refused to allow us to leave Chorlou. My situation was horrible; here I was, a prisoner in Chorlou, while 40 miles away the greatest battle of modern times was being fought out on the heights around Lule Burgas.

I felt bound to wait for my brother until the evening, as I had all the stores and equipment. Finally, at five o'clock in the afternoon, I could bear it no longer, and as I was still without news of him, I decided that he must be either dead

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[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

OUR TENT AT CHORLOU.

or else had got on to the front by some miracle. Accordingly, I purchased a cart for £14, loaded it up with a tent and sufficient food for four days, and the next morning, accompanied by Sir Bryan Leighton, I escaped from Chorlou and the Censor before dawn, and rode toward the sound of the guns.

CHAPTER IX

MY JOURNEY TO CHORLOU

On Saturday, October 26th, I left Constantinople. On Saturday, November 2nd, just one week later, I was back again in the city. During this brief period I was destined to make my way to Lule Burgas to take part in the great decisive battle of the campaign, to retreat with the routed army of Thrace as far as Chorlou, and then to make my way back to Constantinople *viâ* Rodosto. I passed through the most exciting, fatiguing and instructive week of my life; such a one as I never wish to endure again. Looking back now, it all seems like some wild dream, so unnatural were the scenes which I witnessed and so strange the adventures which beset my path from the moment I left Constantinople.

Colonel Izzet arranged for a charming young Turk, Ismet Bey, who is employed in the service of the Ottoman Public Debt, but who volunteered to serve with the army when the war broke out, to accompany me to the front to act as my interpreter. Ismet turned out to be a great deal more to me than a mere interpreter. He became my guide, philosopher and friend, and but for his assistance I do not know what would have become of me, when for days I was wandering about the battlefield hopelessly lost and almost starving.

Ismet is not a pure-blooded Turk, for his mother

is French; he was educated in France, and is the possessor of a charming French wife. He speaks English and French with the utmost facility, has innumerable friends in the Turkish army—as the sequel will show—is a sportsman to the backbone, and prepared to rough it to any extent. Thus a more valuable companion for such a week of excitement and exertion could not have been found anywhere in the Turkish Empire.

The night before I left Constantinople I had no sleep, as I had to make my final preparations, and then to sit up writing a long despatch to the *Daily Telegraph* on the news which had come in that day of the defeat of the Turkish army and the capture of Kirk Kilisse, while on the following morning—Saturday—I was up at 4 a.m. I was to be accompanied as far as Chorlou by Sir Bryan Leighton and a young English cinematograph operator called Gordon, neither of whom had reached Constantinople in time to go to the front with the other correspondents on October 23rd. I offered to take Sir Bryan Leighton in my motor-car. Gordon had a seat in the car which had been bought by Lionel James and Ward Price for the use of *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*. It had been arranged for this car to accompany me in order that I might see it safely to the front.

My car was driven by a young French chauffeur who, despite his good recommendations, turned out to be about the worst of all the mongrel chauffeurs who feed on the unwary in Constantinople. There were the usual delays at the start. The hotel servants brought breakfast late; it was found almost impossible to carry all our effects in the two cars, and many articles had to be rejected at the last moment. Then the cars were late in turning up, and it was near eight o'clock before Ismet, Sir Bryan Leighton, and myself were seated in our brand new Panhard.

We started amidst the encouraging cheers of the entire staff of the Pera Palace Hotel, who had turned out *en masse* to receive their tips. The packing of two motor cars had also caused a dense crowd to gather in front of the hotel, and, when they realised we were off to join the army, they too joined in the chorus of farewell until the streets of Pera fairly resounded with their shouts. It was a beautiful morning, fine and clear, but somewhat cold. It had rained hard on the previous day, but the sky had now cleared, and there was every prospect of our having good weather for the journey.

It was our avowed intention to reach Chorlou, where Colonel Izzet had told me we would find all the correspondents assembled, that same afternoon. He assured me we would not have the slightest difficulty in doing so, as the roads were excellent. However, there were others who did not share his optimism. The agents from whom I had bought the car warned me that the roads were practically non-existent, and that, although in dry weather it would be practicable to pass over them, the task became almost impossible after heavy rain such as we had had on the previous day.

The day before starting I went to the French company who hold the contract for the making of roads throughout the Ottoman Empire. The director was even more pessimistic. He showed me on a map the best route to take, but also warned me that I would come to places, over which it would be almost impossible to pass. My chauffeur, who had once, so he said, driven a car as far as Adrianople, would not commit himself to any definite statement, simply saying, " I will try my best, and I think I can get this car through anywhere." I stupidly allowed myself to be deceived by the wild statements of Colonel Izzet, and was also influenced by the fact that I heard that the military

authorities had commandeered a number of cars and taken them up to Chorlou for the use of the General Staff of the Army.

Just as I was leaving, an Englishman called Bryant, in the employ of the French Road Company, came to see me at the hotel. He had actually been charged with the task of making the road, and said that with fine weather I might get through. His job had now come to an end, as it was impossible to find labour for road-making during the war, and he asked me if I would employ him as a despatch rider, as he thought his knowledge of Turkish and his acquaintance with the people and with the country would prove invaluable. I therefore arranged for him to make his own way up to Chorlou and to join me at the earliest possible date.

The two motors rolled over the Galata Bridge, through the crowded streets of Stamboul and out by the Adrianople Gate to the open country beyond. For the first ten kilometres the road is fair and we made rapid progress. It was obvious from the start that a friendly rivalry existed between the two chauffeurs, the driver of *The Times–Daily Mail* car being a powerful Turk and an excellent driver, but lacking the mechanical knowledge possessed by my driver.

We were all in high spirits and had begun to congratulate ourselves on the rapid progress we were making, when the first of many subsequent disasters overtook us, effectually subdued our premature pride, and warned us of still worse evils to come.

Descending a hill close to San Stefano, the road suddenly ended in a sea of mud. It would have been wiser to leave it and to try to pass over the meadow-land on either side, but the chauffeur, without waiting for instructions, drove blindly into the morass. The gallant car did her utmost to

get through. The momentum of the descent carried her to the centre, then she slowed down, the wheels began to churn the mud with a furious roar, while we made no further progress and gradually sank up to our axles in this liquid slime. We jumped out and pushed and tugged, but in vain. It was obvious that only one course remained open, namely, to lighten the car by unloading all our baggage and the eight cans of petrol which we were carrying. Standing knee-deep in the mud we proceeded with this thankless task, and, when everything had been removed, we again turned on the engine and pushed behind. Again the wheels went whirling round, again the mud was thrown up in all directions, but it was impossible to obtain any grip, and the car refused to budge.

Meanwhile the other chauffeur had succeeded in passing the morass by taking his car off the road. He now suggested that we should send to the nearest farm and secure two strong oxen to drag the motor out. We were saved this necessity by the passing of a wagon with two powerful beasts. The owner was not very willing to let us have them, but Ismet cut him short by commandeering them in the name of the Sultan, the Army, and the Koran. Fortunately we had taken the precaution to supply ourselves with a strong piece of rope before leaving Constantinople. This was tied round the front axle and harnessed to the two oxen. The gallant beasts put their shoulders to the yoke, at the same time the engine was started, and the great tug began. But although the oxen fell in the mud from their exertions, and although all of us pushed from behind, the car would not budge an inch.

We were almost in despair, and sat down by the roadside wondering what to do next. It seemed impossible for us to release the car until the roads dried, and

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT'S MOTOR-CAR BEING PULLED OUT OF A RUT BY MEN.

another shower might retard this indefinitely. From this predicament we were saved by the arrival of a party of soldiers, twelve in number, who had been attracted to the spot by the noise of the engine and the shouts of the bullock driver. Ismet commandeered them, with the promise of liberal backsheesh, to assist us. They put their shoulders to the wheels, and once more the oxen were harnessed up and the engine started. This time our joint exertions succeeded. The car began to move and amidst loud cheers we got her through the morass. But at what a cost! That morning she had left Constantinople on her maiden journey, brand new, her beautiful green paint and smart appearance a source of constant delight to myself, who had never owned a car or ridden in one of which I was at any rate the temporary master before. Now she was covered with mud and the spokes of the wheels had completely disappeared. Her paint had been scratched off outside by the soldiers and inside by the packing and unpacking of the baggage and tins of oil. She had, in fact, ceased to have any likeness to a new car, and resembled an old and sorely battered wreck.

However, to our infinite relief, we found the machinery had in nowise suffered, and after paying the bullock-owner and soldiers liberally, we resumed our chequered way. We had, however, lost two precious hours, and had to abandon any idea of reaching Chorlou that day. As if to lure us on to our eventual doom, the road now became much better, having lately been repaired by the French Road Company, and we made rapid progress as far as the village of Kuyuk Chekmedche, where we crossed the bridge spanning the inlet to the lake. On the other side we were delayed for some time by soldiers and transport carts making their way to the front, but, having shaken

them off, we soon reached Buyuk Chekmedche, which forms the left wing of the famous Chataldja lines.

The road here is carried over the lake by a giant causeway, some three hundred years old, built by one of the Sultans. It is a beautifully artistic structure, but, as the road has never been repaired since it was built, it is extremely difficult to avoid falling through holes, and we were obliged to proceed with extreme caution. On the other side of the causeway we halted for lunch, having brought provisions for a couple of days in the cars. Our passage through the country excited the wildest interest among the inhabitants, many of whom had never seen a motor-car before, and were astonished beyond measure at our progress without horses, and by the strange noises of the machinery. Above all, these simple-minded folk loved to sound the tooter. We had to keep a guard on the car to prevent spare parts and our personal effects from being stolen.

We now had to decide which road we would take. We could either follow the sea-shore, or else turn inland and try a new road which the French Company had told me existed. We had many anxious consultations with the local villagers, and in the end the weight of opinion was strongly against our turning inland, as we were told the road was almost impassable, and would lead us up amongst the hills, which our cars would very likely be unable to climb.

On the other side of the village of Kalikratia we met with our second mishap. We climbed the steep hill all right and then found ourselves on an upland close to the sea shore, where the road disappeared altogether and we had to follow stray tracks left by bullock-wagons, or made by the passage of the transport and artillery on their way to the front. The cars could easily have passed over these tracks had there been no rain, but now they were soft beds

of mud, and we were in constant danger of sticking once again. At length we came to a ditch and stream which completely cut the road, and there was no way round. My car, with infinite difficulty, managed to get across, but as it was mounting the further bank it struck a rock with terrific force and I thought something must be smashed. However, we saw no damage at the time.

Then came the turn of the *Daily Mail* car. Its chauffeur had been abusing mine ever since we had stuck earlier in the day, on account of his bad driving. He now tried to cross the brook at another point by driving at a terrific pace right through it. The result was awful; the car entered the water with a mighty splash, refused to budge another inch, and sank in the mud until the hind wheels had completely disappeared and the water was almost entering the body. We got out and looked at it in dismay. We tried to move it by pushing, but it was hopeless. Then we tried to improvise a bridge by placing boards under the wheels, but it never stirred.

At the end of an hour's work we knew we were beaten, unless we discovered some oxen. Ismet volunteered to go in search of some, and half an hour later returned with two bullocks and their driver, which he had commandeered out of a plough in a neighbouring field. Again we were successful, but we had lost another two hours, and it was now three o'clock and by six it would be almost dark.

When we went to start my car we found to our horror that the starting lever had not been fastened up, and that it had received the full force of the blow when we struck the rock, with the natural result that it was badly bent and we could not start the engine. This time I thought we were absolutely done, but by the joint efforts of the two chauffeurs we managed to hammer it back more or less into shape.

By four o'clock we had reached a village called Kumburgas on the sea shore. The head man, or mayor, told us it would be useless to follow the road along the shore, as at high tide it was washed by the sea and the water would be three or four feet deep. He advised us to keep on the road as far as possible, and then to turn inland and go across country until we had passed the danger points. His words were true. Long before we had reached the village of Bogados we were stopped by the waves and had to drive across country at a very slow rate, guessing what tracks to follow and frequently having to retrace our steps, as the road we were on ended in a morass.

We passed through several small villages and close to one of these, called Jalos, the *Daily Mail–Times* car came to an abrupt stop, and the chauffeur announced he could go no further as his pump was broken and the gasoline would no longer percolate through the machinery. I decided to abandon him and the car together with Gordon, and to push on with Sir Bryan Leighton. We promised to send back the first brass-mender we could find in any of the villages to help him make good the damage. Gordon we advised to try to find a horse and to make his own way to Chorlou or else to return to Constantinople. It was impossible to take him with us as our car was already overcrowded, and he refused to abandon his cinematograph.

About six o'clock we reached the large village of Bogados, where we made a short halt to refill the engine, and we also found a workman who volunteered to return and help mend the *Daily Mail* car. Then we pushed on to Silivri. If the road was bad before, it had now become worse and our progress was merely a jolting crawl. To make matters worse, darkness began rapidly to set in and, unless we succeeded in reaching Silivri, we would have to spend

the night in the open. Finally it became so dark that Ismet, Leighton, and myself were obliged to walk in front and select the most favourable route for the car to follow.

Suddenly the road bifurcated and we had to select which one to follow. In the darkness we took a track which led us to the edge of a minor precipice and very nearly ended our ill-starred expedition. Then we had the stupendous task of turning the car round. This took quite half an hour, but at length we succeeded and got on the right road. It was now quite dark, the sky was clouded and there was no moon or stars to help us on our way. We had to admit we were beaten and to reconcile ourselves to spending a night in the open.

Fortunately, we had stuck near a fountain close to the roadside, and a small hut, evidently a shelter intended for belated travellers. The interior of the hut was too filthy for Ismet, Leighton, and myself, but it served for the purpose of cooking in. There was some dry brushwood inside and with this we made a fire and heated some cocoa. Then, with sardines, bread, and a tongue, we had a tolerable evening meal. Sir Bryan Leighton had with him a small shelter tent, supposed to be waterproof, which he had bought just before leaving England. We decided to sleep in this, while Ismet and the chauffeur took shelter in the motor, which had a hood which completely covered it in.

We had hardly got the tent up when the rain began to fall in a deluge, the like of which I have never seen before in any part of the world. It came down in one great sheet, like a wave. In less time than it takes to write these words it had completely soaked through the tent and lay an inch deep on the canvas floor. However, this made no difference to me. I had no sleep the night before I left Constantinople,

and the exertions of the journey on the top of my illness had completely worn me out. I fell asleep and neither the rain, nor the howling of the wind, nor the curses of Leighton disturbed my slumbers.

I had gone to sleep about nine o'clock and did not wake until 3 a.m. Then I was aroused by a feeling of being icy cold. I had one of those patent electric lamps, which I turned on, and to my astonishment found I was alone in the tent, for Leighton and all his belongings had disappeared. My own plight was a sorry one. I was lying in two or three inches of water, I was soaked through to the skin, and my teeth were chattering from the cold. The rain was still coming down in torrents. Along the road I saw dim figures, mysterious in the darkness, and heard the rumble of wagons. It was the transport train which we had passed earlier in the day and which was pushing on to Silivri.

Several soldiers came to the fountain for water and were amazed to find our motor-car, the interior of which they proceeded to investigate, arousing Ismet from his slumbers and calling forth from him a torrent of Turkish invective, which, by the way, is in no way inferior to our own.

I then went inside the hut and lit a candle. There I found Bryan Leighton comfortably installed on Ismet's camp bed, which he had taken from the motor-car. I felt inclined to turn him out and have a share of it, but I was so cold and wet that rest was impossible. I was very afraid of getting a return of influenza from my immersion, or else of having an attack of rheumatism. I managed with difficulty to light the fire once again and to set the kettle boiling. Then I took a large tumbler and filled it half full of Black and White whiskey, taking nearly a third of the bottle. Then I poured the boiling water into the glass, put in two lumps of sugar, and drank the whole

down. This was the strongest drink I have ever had in my life and I never wish to take another like it. However, it had the desired effect and restored my rapidly-vanishing circulation. I then took off the wettest of my garments, stole two rugs off Leighton's bed, lay down on the floor and once more fell asleep.

CHAPTER X

MY FIRST MEETING WITH ABDULLAH

At six I again woke up frozen through, for the weather was bitterly cold. I aroused the others and once more the kettle was put on to boil, and we had a frugal breakfast, as our provisions were rapidly running out. The chauffeur now set to work to tune up the car. The first delay was caused by the gasoline having frozen into a yellow jelly during the night. This took some time to put right. Then the tank had to be refilled with petrol. This was a very difficult task, because we had had a rest fastened on the back of the car to carry baggage, and the idiots in Constantinople had almost covered up the entrance to the tank.

Then commenced the fearful task of trying to start the engine. The starting lever was useless as, owing to being bent, it would not enter the socket, and the only way of starting the engine was by pushing the car uphill and allowing it to run down again. At half-past eight the engine began to work and we were feeling more light-hearted, when we found one of the tyres required pumping up. Then slowly the horrid truth dawned upon us that it was punctured. This was the last straw. But there was no help for it, and we set to work to assist the chauffeur to change the tyre. It was a long and difficult process, because the wheels were absolutely

caked with mud, and every screw and nut had to be washed in the fountain. The cause of the trouble was found to be a nail two inches long, which had passed completely through the outer cover on into the inner tube.

It was nearly ten o'clock before we were once more under way. How can I describe the state of the road? It baffles my poor descriptive powers to do so. It was bad enough on the previous day, but after the night's downpour it had lost all semblance of being even a track, and was feet deep in mud and slime. How the car ever managed to get through is a mystery that I will not attempt to solve.

We climbed a gentle slope, from the top of which we saw the village of Silivri at our feet. We had camped within about two miles of it without knowing. The descent into Silivri is very dangerous, and was rendered additionally so by the slippery nature of the mud. The car side-slipped in all directions, and frequently turned right round. Just as we were entering the village we came to a high causeway with an unprotected drop of some twenty feet. I begged the chauffeur, who had now completely lost his nerve, to take care, but it was in vain. The car got out of his control and side-slipped absolutely to the edge of the embankment. I thought that it was all over with us. There was not an inch to spare when he managed to jamb on the brakes and bring it to a standstill.

We found the village of Silivri blocked with the great train of bullock-wagons which had passed us in the night, and which was just preparing to continue its dreary crawl to Chorlou. In the village we bought some steel chains and bound them round the wheels to act as non-skids. On the other side of Silivri the road passes over a causeway which is in a terrible state from lack of repair, and then makes a very steep ascent up an old Roman-paved road to reach the tableland beyond. The road was almost blocked with bullock-wagons, and it

was with the utmost difficulty that we made our way through.

We met some refugees and one old Turkish woman mounted on a horse which took fright at the car and deposited the poor old girl in deep water, from which she was rescued by some soldiers. We paid her liberally for her misadventure.

We encountered terrible difficulties in climbing the old Roman road out of Silivri. The surface was almost completely destroyed; ancient cobbles lay about obstructing the wheels, which from time to time would sink deep into holes that had once provided beds for these obstructions. To add to our troubles, the rain had rendered the stones extremely greasy. About half-way up the car came to a dead stop and commenced to run backwards. We checked this movement to the rear by placing stones behind the wheels. The car had come to a standstill sideways across the road and completely blocked the passage of the great bullock train, which also came to a compulsory halt.

Here I made the acquaintance for the first time of the officer in charge of the train, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten, for he proved himself a veritable friend in need. He ordered one of the bullock-wagons to be fastened to the car, and by this means we were able to get it to the top of the incline. But our troubles were not over. The grassy plateau close to the sea shore, over which we now passed, was a quagmire from the rain which had fallen during the night, and, try as we would, the wheels would only revolve impotently beneath us without enforcing any propelling motion.

Again the officer in charge came to our assistance. He pointed out that the road was in the same condition all the way to Chorlou, and that there was absolutely no chance of the car ever reaching that haven of refuge, unless

the bullocks dragged it there. He offered to have one of the bullock-wagons unloaded and its contents placed on other carts, so that it might be free to drag us all the rest of the way. To this proposition we agreed reluctantly, because it meant another two days on the road, and I was dreadfully worried lest a great battle should take place in my absence. Throughout the morning we thought we heard the sound of guns, but I believe it came from our imagination rather than from the hostile armies.

The same officer also lent me a horse to ride, and it was pleasant to leave the old car and canter ahead of the great train of wagons, and to feel I was free and not stuck in the mud for the rest of my natural existence.

The soldiers with the convoy were engaged in clearing out the country as they passed through it. They visited every village, farm, and hamlet, and seized all the horses and commandeered all the able-bodied men, whether Turks, Bulgarians, or Servians, to serve in the ranks. These came very reluctantly, but there was no help for them, and soon there were several hundred of the ill-clad unfortunates walking parallel with the train under the escort of armed sentries, to discourage them from attempting to escape.

Shortly after this we came to two streams which were extremely difficult to cross on account of the mud and the shelving banks. Even the stout oxen had trouble in pulling the lightly laden wagons through them, and our motor car could never have crossed but for their assistance. I watched the whole train pass and found the motor was a long way in the rear. I rode back and found it had been in endless difficulties, chiefly owing to the bad steering of the chauffeur, who would allow too sudden strains on the rope attaching it to the ox-wagon, with the natural result that the rope was continually breaking. However, after endless exertions,

we at length got it across the two brooks. Shortly afterwards the road became much better for a stretch.

Here I did a foolish thing. I was led to believe the car would be able to go without assistance, and, as we were only making a mile an hour with the oxen, I ordered them to be cast off, and the soldier driving the cart was only too pleased to accede to my request. The cart went on and was soon out of sight over a rise in the ground, before we had even succeeded in starting the engine, owing to the bent lever. When the engine was at length started we moved forward fairly rapidly for about a mile and then came to a morass of mud and ruts. We put on all speed and endeavoured to force our way through it, but it was all in vain. The car stuck and sank above the axles in the mud until the machinery of the engine was also resting in the slime.

This time we were down and out. The bullock train was already some three miles away, and there was no likelihood of anyone returning to assist us. Every horse, ox, and able-bodied man capable of bearing arms, had been swept up by the onward march of the column, and we were stranded at 4 o'clock, on a bitterly cold afternoon, on a high plateau, close to the sea, without shelter, without water, almost without food—for only some chocolate and a few biscuits remained of the store which we had brought with us from Constantinople.

I think, for the first time, a feeling akin to despair crept over us all. For some time we said nothing, but sat ruefully contemplating the car, the wheels of which had almost completely disappeared. Then we held a consultation. I suggested that Ismet should return to Silivri and endeavour to obtain oxen to drag the car back into the village, and at the same time hire horses to enable us to continue our journey to Chorlou. Suddenly a bullock-wagon appeared. It belonged to a party of refugees on

their way to Stamboul. The oxen were, however, in poor condition, and they could not budge the car an inch. In fact it was painfully obvious that, until the roads dried, the car would remain stuck exactly where it was. In these circumstances we felt it would be useless to return to Silivri and I was extremely reluctant to retrace my steps, as my one desire at this moment was to press on to Chorlou, so as to be in time for the great battle.

At last we agreed on an alternative plan. It was decided that Ismet and myself should walk on and endeavour to overtake the convoy at its halting place, and ask the commandant to send back soldiers and bullocks, and to take charge of the car until we reached Chorlou. Sir Bryan Leighton and the chauffeur were to remain with it during the night. Ismet and myself lost no time, but set off through the mud. I looked back and saw two melancholy figures, Sir Bryan and the worn-out, miserable chauffeur, endeavouring to obtain some shelter from the icy wind by erecting the wretched shelter-tent that had taken in so much water on the previous evening.

I shall not forget in a hurry that horrible tramp through the mud, which Ismet and myself had after the bullock train. It was 4 p.m. when we started—that day we had only made 5 kilometres in the car—and only two hours more remained of daylight. I detest walking at any time, and had on a pair of field-boots, which, having been soaked through on the previous evening, now stuck to my feet and hurt them horribly.

We came to a river which cut the road, and wondered how we were to cross it without becoming soaked up to our waists. There was a small party of Turkish soldiers encamped on the bank, and they were good enough to make us some tea. They also told us that the convoy had split in two portions on the other side of the river in

order to find shelter for the night at two farms. One powerful soldier then volunteered to carry us through the river on his back, an offer which was gratefully accepted, as neither Ismet nor I wished to be immersed in the icy cold water just at sunset.

It was half past six when, footsore and weary, we reached the farm. Here we found our friend encamped. We told him of our troubles and difficulties. I believe the Captain's name was Fouad, but if it was not, I hope, if he ever reads these lines, that he will accept for himself the infinite thanks I tender him now for all that he did for us on this critical evening, when any delay would have meant failure to witness the battle of Lule Burgas.

Both Ismet and I were worn out, but we agreed we must push on to Chorlou that night, even if we had to do so on foot. The Captain then suggested the following plan, which we adopted. He undertook to send back that same night to the car an escort of twelve soldiers, four strong oxen, and some stout rope, as well as spades, so as to dig it out of the mud. He undertook to find two horses for Ismet and myself and to put us on the road to Chorlou. The horses we were to hand back to him on his arrival in Chorlou, which place he hoped to reach in two days' time. He said he would accept full responsibility for our motor-car and for the baggage, and would undertake to deliver the lot safe and sound to us. He also said that he would look after Sir Bryan Leighton and the chauffeur.

He advised Ismet and myself to stay the night at the farm and to push on to Chorlou at dawn, as it was an eight hours' ride and the temperature had fallen below zero. Although the temptation to remain was almost irresistible Ismet and I resolutely refused, and this decision to push on at all costs just brought us to the front in time, as the sequel will show.

But we were hungry. We thought that Captain Fouad would offer us something to eat before we started on our night ride, but unfortunately the owner of the farm had fled and his house was shut up, so the unfortunate officers of the convoy had little to eat themselves. However, he did give us a cup of Turkish coffee. Then he announced the horses were ready.

To our surprise, on entering the farm-yard we found an escort of twelve soldiers under a sergeant, whom Captain Fouad announced were to accompany us to Chorlou. It seemed little short of cruelty to ask these men to walk some forty kilometres after they had been on the march all day and for several previous days, and we begged him to allow us to proceed alone, as we felt sure we could find the road. But the Captain would not hear of this. He said the country was infested with brigands, Bulgarian sympathisers, and disbanded soldiers, who might murder us without compunction, in which case he would be responsible. There was no help for it, so mounting our horses, we set off in the darkness with our escort in front.

I do not think that Ismet and I will ever forget that night ride to Chorlou. For the first two hours all went well, but then an icy cold wind sprang up and chilled us to the bone. We were soon glad to dismount and warm ourselves by walking. We became more and more hungry, until the feeling of emptiness became almost insupportable. Ismet found unexpectedly in his pocket a cake of chocolate which, to use the well-known advertisement, was "both grateful and comforting." He also had a small flask of brandy, of which we took mouthfuls at intervals throughout the night just to restore a temporary warmth to our bodies.

Once we lost the road, some of the escort going one way and some another. This caused a delay, before the stragglers were found again. As we drew nearer Chorlou

the ground rose, and we passed over a high plateau, across which the wind swept in an icy blast, until even the patient Turkish soldiers began to grumble. By this time they had become so exhausted that two of them could hardly keep up with us, and we were obliged to make frequent halts. We gave them rides on the horses, but this was not much relief, as the weary beasts were continually stumbling over the ruts which had by now hardened.

We came upon some refugees, who were camped close to the road, endeavouring to warm themselves by a fire. It was a sad sight. The oxen lay round in a circle so as to obtain the benefit of the friendly blaze; the women and children lay mixed up with the oxen, obtaining warmth from their bodies on one side and from the fire on the other. Our escort immediately surrounded the camp and demanded if they had any arms. This the spokesman of the party denied, but the sergeant was not satisfied. He ordered his men to turn everything out of the wagons and to search them. Beneath a miscellaneous and filthy collection of old clothes, household furniture and bags of oats, two rifles, a Mauser and a Martini, were unearthed. The sergeant cursed the refugees for having lied to him, and then we proceeded on our way. Shortly afterwards we came upon a second camp and secured two more rifles.

It seemed cruel to disturb these poor wretches, who were only bent on reaching Stamboul and crossing into Asia Minor, but the soldiers had received stringent orders to disarm all the civilian population and these orders had to be obeyed. They soon found the additional burden of these four rifles unbearable, and I think were extremely sorry they had ever found them. I relieved them of two and carried them for a time across my saddle, but the cold steel soon froze my fingers and I returned them to their owners. Long before we reached Chorlou they had disappeared. I did not see actually what

became of them, but I fancy the soldiers, without consulting the sergeant, chucked them aside, after first removing the bolts from the breech blocks.

Between one and two a.m. we saw the glare of some lights in the distance, which the soldiers declared must come from the camps round Chorlou. This welcome sight roused our drooping spirits, but it seemed an endless time before we reached the outskirts of the village, and it was not until close on two-thirty a.m. that we finally entered the streets of the town.

Ismet and I expected on reaching Chorlou to have no difficulty in finding the camp of the correspondents. Naturally at this hour there were but few astir, except the sentries over the buildings which were being used by the military authorities. Ismet made careful inquiries of them as to the whereabouts of our colleagues, but could obtain no satisfactory reply. One of the soldiers, however, at length declared they were in certain houses in the town. We repaired to one of the houses he had named, but found it full of weary soldiers. We continued our search, but without success. At length an officer told us they were not in the town of Chorlou, but were camped close to the railway station two miles away.

This was bad news as it meant we would have to take the road once more. However, the prospect of food and shelter proved irresistible, and after thanking him we once more rode out of Chorlou. Meanwhile, our escort had disappeared. The moment they reached Chorlou, without even bidding us farewell or giving us the opportunity of handing them over any backsheesh, they bolted to the nearest local inn to obtain rest and refreshment. We soon reached the neighbourhood of the railway station, passing through endless standing camps of white tents, the larger number of which seemed to be deserted, as the troops had been pushed on to the north. There was no one about at the

railway station except a sentry who could give us but little reliable information. He said he had heard that some Europeans had been camped there, but he thought they had already left.

He gave us one piece of news which seemed to offer a ray of hope, namely, that Abdullah, the Commander-in-Chief, and his Staff were in a barrack placed on a high hill about a quarter of a mile from the station.

By this time Ismet and I were thoroughly fed up with life. We were almost frozen, worn out with fatigue, and so hungry that the mere mention of food almost caused tears to fall from our eyes. We lost no time in hastening up the steep hill to the barrack, where we expected to learn definitely what had become of the correspondents.

A sentry was on guard, and he was greatly surprised at our sudden apparition in the middle of the night. Ismet explained the position. The sentry replied that there were no correspondents at the barracks, and that he had not heard of any at Chorlou. He advised us to see the officer in charge of the guard who might be able to give us some information. We found the officer asleep in a room. He was very agreeable, but had no news. He showed us where Abdullah was sleeping and advised us to ask one of his staff officers.

I said to Ismet, "It does not matter where the camp is. We must have shelter for the night. I don't care where we find it, but I shall freeze if I have to stay out in the cold any longer." Ismet quite agreed with me and whilst I held both horses he knocked at the door and was admitted by a sleepy orderly. It seemed an endless time before he again made his appearance, and I began to think he had gone to sleep and had forgotten all about me, when he appeared at the door, his face wreathed in smiles.

"It is alright," he said; "you can come in, for the Commander-in-Chief, Abdullah Pasha, wants to see you."

"What have you done, Ismet?" I replied. "I hope you have not awakened the Commander-in-Chief."

"Yes," he replied. "I went inside and found his two staff-officers asleep in bed. I woke them up, and explained matters; but they only replied, 'We can do nothing for you. You must go and find shelter in the village of Chorlou.' Suddenly I remembered that Abdullah is a distant cousin of mine, so I went to his room feeling quite desperate from the cold and hunger, and woke him up, to the horror of his aides-de-camp. Abdullah was immensely surprised to see me, and thought I had dropped from the skies. I explained to him our position, and that you were outside in the cold, and he immediately told me to bring you up to him. Now we are sure of shelter for the night."

Ismet and I then entered the Commander-in-Chief's presence, who greeted me as if I were his best friend, and had known him all my life. Abdullah is a big man with a splendid head, rather grey hair and a moustache. He has the most kindly expression always on his face, and looks the typical English country squire of tradition. He was seated on the edge of his bed, clad in pyjamas, with his great-coat wrapped round him. I apologised for disturbing him at such an hour, but he merely laughed and said: "It matters little to me these days what hour I am awakened, because telegrams are coming in at all hours of the night, and I am only too glad to be of any assistance to you. You must be hungry. Unfortunately, my cooks left last night for another destination, but I will get my servant to make you some tea, and I think I can find you some cheese and biscuits."

Shortly afterwards Abdullah's servant appeared with tea, biscuits and cheese, which was one of the most welcome repasts I have ever sat down to. After I had eaten for some time Abdullah insisted on my telling him every detail

of my journey from Constantinople, and laughed heartily at the picture I drew of the motor, moving at two miles an hour, drawn by oxen.

I asked him where the correspondents were quartered, to which he replied: "I have not seen them yet. They were here for a few days, but they have now gone on to Lule Burgas. I suppose you want to get there as soon as possible. Well, I will see if you can go by train to-morrow."

I then asked the Commander-in-Chief if I had missed a big battle, to which he replied: "No; you have missed nothing. There has only been some desultory fighting round Kirk Kilisse, and we have not yet had 300 wounded. So do not worry; you will see a big battle yet."

How little did I realise then the dramatic manner in which the general's prophecy would shortly be realised! Neither did Abdullah himself foresee that the great battle would come so soon, because he told me he expected to remain in Chorlou for another two days. He then went on to speak of the immense difficulties which confronted his army in the campaign, of the terrible state of the roads, of the insufficiency of transport, and of the poverty of the country, which was quite incapable of supporting a large army of more than 100,000 men. He spoke with the greatest misgiving of the prospects of a winter's snows.

We talked for nearly an hour, and then the Mushir said, "You must be worn out, and sleep will do you good. There is no place to put you here, but I will turn out some of my staff-officers and make them give you their beds."

I begged Abdullah to do nothing of the sort, but he laughed and replied, "Do not worry; they have slept quite long enough. I have lots of work for them to do, and it won't hurt them to get up now."

The two staff-officers were therefore aroused from their slumbers, and, although they displayed no outward annoy-

ance, must have inwardly cursed our intrusion on their well-earned repose.

Ismet and myself only had four hours' sleep, for at 8 a.m. on Monday, October 28th, we were roused by one of Abdullah's A.D.C.'s, who came to tell us that a train was expected from the south, bearing the Minister of War, Nazim Pasha, and would afterwards go on to Lule Burgas, and that if we cared to travel by it we might do so. We got up at once, and one of the A.D.C.'s, who apparently bore us no grudge for having been turned out of his bed at 4 a.m. to make room for us, brought us a cup of coffee and some biscuits.

I then went to bid farewell to Abdullah, and to thank him for the great kindness which he had shown us both. The Commander-in-Chief was sitting at a table poring over the Turkish Staff Map of Thrace. He did not seem nearly so cheerful as a few hours before, and I am inclined to think he had received some bad news that morning. It was probably the news of the defeat of the 1st Army Corps between Kavakli and Jenidze, on October 25th, but it is almost incredible that this information did not reach him before the morning of October 28th. However, considering the appalling state of confusion which reigned everywhere, and the almost entire absence of any means of communication, it is feasible that it did not reach head-quarters until the dawn of October 28th. At any rate, in the course of his conversation with me in the middle of the night, Abdullah made no mention of this reverse, and to judge from his outward demeanour he was perfectly cheerful and confident, and he declared emphatically that the army had suffered only three hundred casualties up-to-date.

Abdullah also promised to look after Sir Bryan Leighton on his arrival, and to send him on to Lule Burgas by the first

available train. I then bade him farewell, little dreaming that a night later I would meet him in such dramatic circumstances.

Monday, October 28th, was one of the coldest days I have known since the closing months of the siege of Port Arthur, and we had a long wait at the station before the train came in sight round a bend in the line.

Meanwhile, several trains full of refugees passed through on their way to Constantinople. Never have I seen more strange sights. So crowded were these trains with Mahommedans fleeing from the Bulgarian invasion, that men, women, and children preferred to sit on the bare roofs of the carriages, desperately clinging to one another to save themselves from falling off, rather than risk being left behind. Many had been without food for days, and there was none to be obtained at Chorlou, an alarming fact, which did not augur well for the troops in the field. Ismet and myself managed to procure a loaf, which we shared with several officers also waiting to leave for Lule Burgas, but tea and coffee were quite unobtainable.

When the train did at length arrive, it did not contain Nazim, but Zia Pasha, his Chief of Staff, who had come to Chorlou to have an interview with Abdullah Pasha. At the station to greet him was a common soldier in a dirty war-worn khaki uniform, whom Zia Pasha shook warmly by the hand. Ismet said to me, "Do you see that man? He is Telad, the late Minister of the Interior, who is serving as a volunteer."

I regarded this patriot with amazement, and wondered if one of our ministers would have acted likewise. Telad was one of the most prominent men in the revolution, and used to pass his time at Salonika, where he was a telegraph clerk, tapping the wire and reading Abdul Hamid's plans for the destruction of the Young Turks. When the present war

broke out he paid his forty pounds exemption fee, and then volunteered as a private soldier.

It was twelve noon before the train left Chorlou for Lule Burgas, and it was one of the very last which made the journey during the war, for on the following day the station of Lule Burgas fell into the hands of the Bulgarians. The journey up was uneventful. We saw from the window crowds of refugees slowly making their way towards Chorlou, and we also passed the remains of a train which had left the metals and had been overturned at Seidler, but except for these incidents there was little or nothing to show that a great battle was imminent. As we neared Lule Burgas, we thought we heard the sound of a distant cannonade, and later in the afternoon we learnt we had not been mistaken.

It was 3 p.m. when we reached Lule Burgas station, which is some six kilometres from the town. It was crammed with soldiers, transport, and refugees. Zia Pasha, Chief of Staff to Nazim, left the train and, accompanied by two staff officers, entered a broken-down cart and drove towards the town. He persistently refused to take any notice of Ismet and myself, and it was obvious that his attitude was not friendly towards Europeans. We went to the officer in command at the station, and asked him if he could provide us with a carriage to enable us to reach the town of Lule Burgas. Just before we left Chorlou, Abdullah gave Ismet and myself a pass written in his own handwriting, requesting all and sundry to assist us in any way in their power. This proved an invaluable document on several occasions, and the officer soon found us an old victoria drawn by two broken-down horses, which speedily carried us to Lule Burgas. It was somewhat ominous that at the station, in reply to our inquiries, no one seemed to have heard of the correspondents, and the station-master

most emphatically declared they had not come by train. However, we thought they had probably ridden up from Chorlou.

Ismet and myself were now in excellent spirits at the prospect of shortly seeing our friends, our horses fed, and our camp, but the sound which cheered us up the most was that of cannon, which we could hear rumbling away in the north, showing that an engagement was already in progress.

On reaching Lule Burgas, a small town situated in a valley surrounded by a low range of hills, we inquired for the camp of the correspondents, but, to our amazement, could find no trace of them. We repaired to the town hall and were heartily greeted by the colonel in command whose name, I believe, was Fouad Bey. He said, "No correspondents are here. Abdullah must have made a mistake. They have never come." Ismet and I looked at one another in amazement and felt depressed, as we had had nothing to eat all day and had no shelter for the night. Colonel Fouad then said:

"I suppose you want to see the fighting, Well, you can go and see it. Follow the sound of the guns. They commenced at three o'clock and seem to be coming nearer every minute."

We explained our difficulty to the colonel, as we had no horses, no food, and no tents. He said, "There are no horses to be had in the town, as all have been seized by the troops who passed through here yesterday, but I will do my best to find you some by the morning. In any case, it is not worth your while going out to-night, as there are only two hours' more daylight, and the fighting will be over before you get there."

The mayor of the town then came to our aid and said, "I will arrange for you to pass the night in a local inn (or

han, as they are called in Roumelia), and afterwards the proprietor will also find you some food."

The news that the correspondents were not in Lule Burgas and were not even expected there caused Ismet and myself furiously to think. It was obvious from the sound of the guns, which kept on booming until nightfall, that they could not be nearer to the probable scene of hostilities than ourselves, and we could at least congratulate ourselves on being well placed for the ensuing battle.

On the other hand, we were without any tents, without any equipment, or even a change of clothes, but, what was worst of all, we had no horses. We also had no food, but expected to be able to live on the country for a day or two. But the absence of our horses worried us most; for without them it would be almost impossible to follow the various phases of the battle. I told Ismet we must obtain horses at any price, and gave him *carte blanche* to buy any that he could discover in the town, together with two saddles. I had plenty of money, having more than two hundred pounds in gold strapped round my waist. We decided that, with or without horses, we would make no further effort to find our missing colleagues until after the battle. In fact, I would have made no effort to find them at all, except for the fact that I was anxious for my brother to rejoin me, and above all to obtain my horses, my camp equipment, and my supplies.

We accompanied the proprietor of the han to his hostelry. It had been closed up, as the majority of the Turkish inhabitants had fled from Burgas some days before, and were now well on their way to Stamboul. Ranged round a very dirty deserted courtyard were several small rooms, each containing a still dirtier bed covered by a thick quilt. The proprietor did his utmost to make us comfortable. He managed to secure a chicken and some eggs, a loaf of bread,

and three bottles of local wine which, on an ordinary occasion, would not have commanded our favour, but which seemed delicious in our exhausted and semi-starving condition.

The cooking, however, was not equal to the materials. The eggs were ruined through being fried in some rancid oil, and the chicken was likewise spoiled to the European palate. However, this mattered but little. We made a substantial meal and retired to rest, having secured some extra coverings from the spare beds as the night was bitterly cold.

CHAPTER XI

LULE BURGAS—THE FIRST DAY

We passed a fairly comfortable night, and were astir at dawn, aroused by the cannon, which again commenced to boom from the north-east far more vigorously than on the previous day. We hastened to the town hall to inquire if the colonel had succeeded in finding us horses; but he had not, and sent us on to the commander of the independent cavalry division, Sali Pasha, who was quartered in the town. We found the general in a local wine shop with his staff, snatching some refreshment. All the officers were most agreeable, but explained that for days they had not seen their baggage or spare horses, and therefore could not procure us a mount.

We were in despair, and I was suffering greatly from sore feet, as my field boots had been soaked for three days and had become frozen to my feet. Ismet suggested that I should try to buy a new pair in the town in case we had to walk, and I managed to procure a strange outfit from a local Jew for a very high price, and also a pair of puttees. Thus I could manage to walk with difficulty.

Once more we returned to the town hall, where we found the colonel and the mayor in a great state of excitement. The colonel said, "You are just in time. I have received news that a large force of Bulgarians is advancing from the north-east, and we have only one battalion of infantry with which to defend the position. If you want to see the fight come along with me." The mayor at the same time came up and said, "I have found two horses, but only

one saddle." Ismet and I examined these animals. Both were old and almost past work, but we decided to take the one with the saddle, and ride and walk alternately.

Meanwhile the colonel had disappeared, so we followed two squadrons of cavalry, which were hastily leaving the town and making for the hills half a mile away, from which the sound of violent musketry fire was just breaking out. We had only gone a short distance when the enemy's shells began to burst amongst the infantry on the ridge. The volleys became heavier; the great battle had begun. I glanced at my watch. It was exactly eleven o'clock.

As we advanced to the ridge a crowd of wounded men began to trickle away from the firing line towards the town, and also a great many stragglers who were not wounded. An officer stopped and spoke to us.

"Do not go on any further. It is awful up there. The enemy are in tremendous force. I have already been wounded, and we cannot hold the position."

Ismet and I soon learned the truth of his words from the bullets which began to fly around us in ever-increasing numbers, and, not wishing to become mixed up in the conflict, we moved more to the left to join the cavalry, who had dismounted and were taking up a position on a hill, evidently with the intention of checking the enemy's advance towards the railway station, as it was obviously their intention to try to cut the line.

Suddenly the Turkish infantry broke, and made for the shelter of the town, running in complete disorder in small groups. Ismet and I were swept away in the general *sauve qui peut*, and beating our wretched horse to make him move more quickly, were soon across the bridge and under the shelter of the houses.

Here we found a half-battalion of infantry strongly entrenched, and evidently determined to defend the town to the end. Their attitude was splendid. They were

in no way demoralised by the sudden abandonment of the hills, and each man, as he lay behind an entrenchment or stone wall, seemed determined to hold his ground or die.

The refugees from the hills soon recovered from their temporary panic and joined their comrades in the town. The wounded from the hills began slowly to trickle in, most of them making their way on foot, as there were no ambulances, as far as I could see, anywhere.

At this moment Sali Pasha and his cavalry dashed through the opening in the ranks of the infantry and hastened to join the remainder of his dismounted cavalry, who were already engaged with the enemy. At 11.30 masses of dark-clothed figures began to appear among the trees on the low ridge of hills lately evacuated by the Turks. A great shout went up: "There are the Bulgarians!"

For a few minutes the enemy withdrew from sight, and then reappeared in the form of a strong firing line, steadily advancing. The Turkish soldiers around me commenced to ply them with long-ranged fire, which did not check the advance for a moment. A staff officer dashed up shouting: "Everyone must clear out of the town and make for the higher ground behind, where you will find our infantry entrenched. The town cannot long be held. Only the rear-guard can remain."

Ismet and I then made our way slowly to the rear, but were dragged into a vortex of men, women, children, carts, stray soldiers, unarmed men and wounded, all hastening to escape from the enemy's shrapnel, which had commenced to burst over the town itself. The confusion was awful. A complete panic had seized the flying mob, and every minute we expected to have the enemy's shells burst in our midst.

I had no time to save my boots, which later in the day fell into the hands of the Bulgarians. The road outside the town was a mass of fleeing refugees. A magazine of old or obsolete arms and ammunition had been hastily burst open,

and all were invited to help themselves to the contents. The road led up to a high plateau, for, as I have said, Lule Burgas lies in a valley, through which there runs a shallow river, and on the crest of the plateau I saw long lines of Turkish infantry entrenched, together with two batteries of artillery in position.

Having reached the crest, Ismet and myself refused to flee any further, and stayed with the guns to watch the Bulgarian attack on Lule Burgas, which lay at our feet only a short mile away.

Two separate engagements were now taking place in this portion of the field, for part of the Bulgarian infantry had right-wheeled, and were making a desperate attack on Sali's dismounted cavalry, who were nobly trying to check the advance on the railway station, the capture of which would mean the cutting of the line and the isolation of Adrianople. The fighting in this quarter was of the fiercest character, and the Turkish cavalry, only about 800 strong, lost 150 men before being obliged to retire.

But the sight which interested me the most was the attack on Lule Burgas. The Bulgarians now half-surrounded the town, and had advanced half-way down the hill, where they lay firing at the entrenched battalion of Turks in the town. The latter had inflicted very heavy losses on the invaders, who were quite devoid of any cover. But now the Bulgarian artillery had been brought up to the crest of the ridge, and commenced to shell the town and the Turkish entrenchments on the higher ground where we stood. Their fire was wonderfully accurate, but the Turks stood their ground well and refused to leave the town.

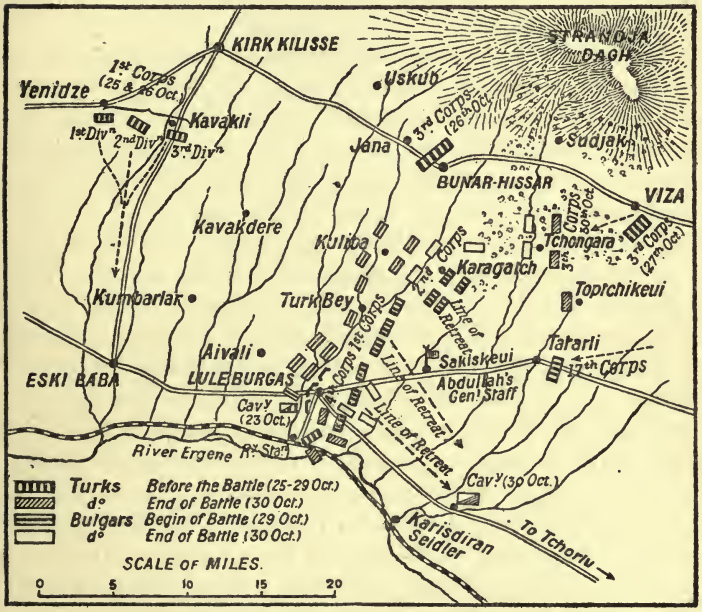
For more than two hours this rear-guard held out heroically. About two o'clock fresh masses of Bulgarian infantry debouched from the hills and rushed down into the firing line, and the whole line dashed forward with magnificent *élan*. The fire from the Turkish entrenchments now rose

[*Photo Ismet Bey*

TURKISH INFANTRY DRIVEN OUT OF LULE BURGAS BY THE BULGARIANS.

into a sullen roar. It was independent, and as rapid as each man could load and fire. The Bulgarians fell in scores, and the advance came to an end only a few hundred yards away from the entrenchments.

But the defence had shot its last bolt, the ammunition



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF LULE BURGAS.

was exhausted, and much against its will the heroic rear-guard was obliged to fall back.

I was much struck by the failure of the Turkish artillery to take advantage of the splendid target afforded by the Bulgarians as they advanced on Lule Burgas. When we asked the commander of the battery why he did not fire, he said, "I am not sure if they are Bulgarians or our own people, and I have received no orders to fire in any case."

Finally he did condescend to drop a few shells at them, but these were badly aimed and fell short.

On the retirement of the Turkish rear-guard the Bulgarians entered Lule Burgas and hoisted a flag on the mosque, but for some time they only managed to maintain possession of one-half of the town, on account of the Turkish shell fire which was now concentrated on them.

Hitherto I have only attempted to describe what was taking place on the extreme left of the Turkish line and extreme right of the Bulgarian, but once Lule Burgas was taken I was able to look round, and I will now attempt to give an account of what was going on in other directions stretching nearly twenty miles to the north-east.

The ground, over which six army corps were contending, is a vast undulating plain, with shallow valleys, in which are half-buried, scattered villages, which naturally played a very important part in both the attack and the defence. So open is the ground, that from the higher ridges it was possible to follow the movements of all three Turkish Army Corps although, naturally, those individual incidents which make war so fascinating could only be followed close at hand.

On this day's fighting, namely, Tuesday, October 29th, the Turks had three Army Corps engaged; the fourth, under Abouk Pasha, was in and around Lule Burgas. From this point the line stretched north-east to the village of Turk Bey, where the ground was held by the 1st Army Corps, under Yavir Pasha, and from here was carried on to the village of Bunar-Hissar by the 2nd Corps, under the command of Shefket Torgut Pasha. The extreme right of the line was at Viza, where was stationed the Third Corps under Mahmoud Muhktar.

Along the whole of this front the battle raged furiously throughout Tuesday, October 29th. All along the line the Bulgarians were on the offensive, and, to gauge from the severity of the artillery fire, their evident object was

to break through between the right of the 1st Corps and the left of the 2nd Corps, between Turk Bey and Karagach.

It is utterly impossible for me or any single eye-witness to describe the whole of this great conflict in detail. It will be months before the reports of all the commanders are collected and collated and the whole story rendered intelligible to the military reader. I can only put on paper that which I saw with my own eyes.

The whole of the battle front for twenty miles was clearly shown by the masses of bursting shrapnel shells. Never before have I seen such an artillery fire. For every battery the Turks seemed to have in action, the Bulgarians were able to produce half a dozen, and, whereas the Turkish fire was desultory and generally ill-directed, the Bulgarian shells burst in a never-ceasing storm on the Turkish positions with a maximum of effect. In fact, the enemy seemed to have so little respect for the Turkish batteries that they seldom directed their fire against them, but concentrated it on the infantry, who suffered enormous losses, and became sadly demoralised.

There seemed to be no escaping from these Bulgarian shells. Ismet and myself were kept continually on the move, for, whenever we took up a position from which to watch the fight, we were sure to be driven from it by the enemy's fire, and what rendered the plight of ourselves and of the Turkish troops all the worse, was the impossibility of obtaining any cover on this bare plateau of grassy land or ploughed fields.

After the taking of Lule Burgas, the Bulgarian advance against the left flank of the Turkish line was checked for the remainder of the day by the artillery, and towards evening, an hour before darkness set in, Abouk Pasha, the commander of the 4th Corps, decided to deliver a counter-attack on the town with one of his divisions advancing from the high ground into the valley. This attack was well-

directed, and seemed to meet with success. I was talking to the commander of the 12th Division, which made this attack, and he was highly pleased with its success.

"The enemy," he said, "seems to be retiring, and is only offering a feeble resistance with his artillery and mitrailleuses."

I saw a portion of the Bulgarian infantry all run away back towards the hills, but the Turkish counter-attack, which seemed to offer hopes of great things, came to an abrupt stop with the fall of night. For two hours, between four and six, the fighting on the extreme right of the Turkish line became furious. The artillery fire on both sides swelled into a crescendo, and the rifle fire was so incessant that it seemed to come from one huge machine. We could see the smoke moving slowly forward on the right, which meant that the 2nd Army Corps was not only holding its own, but was actually advancing, and all the officers with whom I spoke were confident that the day was going well for the Imperial army.

But just before dusk the Bulgarians made a supreme effort against the 2nd Army Corps, and not only stopped its advance, but actually pushed it back, recovering some of their lost ground.

Now for the first time the unpleasantness of our own position dawned upon Ismet and myself. Throughout the day we had been too busy watching the fighting and moving from point to point to avoid the shrapnel shells to trouble about our future. But directly the night fell, we were most unpleasantly reminded, by cold and the pangs of hunger, that we had nowhere to spend the night and were without food. We might have taken some from Lule Burgas, but the capture of the town came so suddenly and unexpectedly that we left without anything.

In the early morning I picked up and placed in the pocket of my overcoat half a loaf of bread, but on entering the han to speak with Sali Pasha, I placed it for a moment

on the table, and it must have been immediately snatched up by some hungry soldier, for I never saw it again. Fortunately, on the previous evening Ismet had taken the precaution to fill his water bottle with the one remaining bottle of wine, but by the evening this had been entirely consumed.

A feeling of complete desertion settled over us both. We felt we had not got a friend in the world and were entirely dependent on our own exertions. Fortunately, at this moment Ismet met a staff officer with whom he was acquainted, and who said he was on his way to the headquarters of Abouk Pasha, the Commander of the 4th Army Corps, and advised us to come along with him.

Abouk, who is a very big thick-set man, received us in the most friendly manner, but he seemed somewhat depressed over the result of the day's operations. When he heard of our plight, he said:

"I would like to give you food and shelter, but I am no better off myself, as I have nowhere to go, and I shall have to spend the night riding around with my escort. Last night was bitterly cold, and I think to-night will be just as bad. I do not advise you to remain out in the open, and therefore I think the wisest course would be for you to make for the headquarters of Abdullah Pasha, the Commander-in-Chief, which are at the village of Sakiskeuy, about ten kilometres north of here. I will give you two soldiers from my escort, who know the road, and who will conduct you there."

Abouk Pasha then went on to talk of war, which he described as a miserable game, only fit for barbarians, and having nothing glorious about it.

Having thanked the general, Ismet and myself set off in the darkness towards Sakiskeuy. The spectacle now was extremely majestic. The firing had almost entirely died down, and only an occasional cannon shot, or the distant crackle of musketry reminded one that 200,000 combatants

lay ready to fly at each other's throats directly dawn should appear. The whole of the horizon as far as the eye could reach was lit up by a chain of burning villages and hamlets, for the Bulgarians set every village they took on fire, and the Turkish soldiers, careless after the fatigues of the day, often involuntarily brought similar disaster to the homes of their unfortunate countrymen. These fires led many of the Turkish generals to believe that the Bulgarians were retiring, and that dawn would find the positions in front of them evacuated.

Our course to Sakiskeuy led us in the rear of the lines of the 4th and the 1st Army Corps. We passed innumerable stragglers searching for their regiments, ammunition trains lost in the darkness, deserters from the fighting line who had had enough of war, and hundreds of wounded men, looking either for shelter or for field dressing stations. For these latter they looked in vain, for they seemed almost non-existent.

The plight of the wounded was awful. So inadequate was the Turkish medical service, that the wounded could hardly secure first aid. There were no mounted ambulances, and hardly any stretchers. Thus every wounded man who could possibly walk had to make his own way to the rear, and the serious cases were either left to perish miserably on the ground, or were carried, to meet a similar fate, into the nearest village, where they were abandoned, as there was no possible way of carrying them off when the army was in full retreat.

Hundreds of wounded stopped us on our way to Sakiskeuy, and asked us if we could tell them where they could find the ambulances or the hospitals. Alas! neither existed.

We reached the village at 9 o'clock and found it full of exhausted troops and wounded men, who had taken possession of every house. The village had been formerly a prosperous one, and contained considerable stores of grain

and straw, but absolutely no food. The men, many of whom had eaten nothing for two days, were eating raw mealie cobs, or else grinding them to flour and making a coarse, almost uneatable bread, which at least was better than nothing.

We found Abdullah and his staff installed in a miserable little four-roomed hut, crowded together like flies. The general was very much surprised to see us, but greeted us with his usual kindliness, and said we might stay with his staff for the night. Ismet and myself were glad of shelter, as we were thoroughly exhausted after our long wearying day without a particle of food, and nothing to drink except one bottle of local wine, which we had saved from Lule Burgas.

But the General Staff of the army were in almost as bad a plight. They had come from Chorlou at a moment's notice, leaving all their baggage behind and were almost without food. The staff officers and ourselves dined off one plate of pilaf and two loaves of stale bread of the worst quality, and of such a taste that one felt after each mouthful that one had robbed the museum at Pompeii.

However, we made the best of it, and were all very cheerful, for the day's operations seemed to have taken a favourable turn and the general impression at headquarters was that on the following morning the Bulgarians would be found in full retreat.

After dinner Abdullah came in and talked to me for a quarter of an hour, and gave me a splendid cigar, which, in the circumstances, was about the greatest luxury anyone could have provided. He inquired carefully of what I had seen during the day, and seemed greatly surprised when I told him that Lule Burgas had been taken, a piece of information which had hitherto not reached him. He then pointed out to me on the map the various positions of his army corps, and told me several details of the fighting of which I was hitherto ignorant. He laid special stress on

the success of the 2nd Corps, which for some time had carried all before it, and had only been checked by the desperate counter-attack of the Bulgarians just before dusk. The general said, "The Slavs always make their final effort before dusk. It is the hour they like best for fighting."

Then he went on to explain his plans for the following day, and used these memorable words:

"Mahmoud Mukhtar with the 3rd Army Corps is coming up from Viza to-morrow. I shall be able to throw him on the enemy's left wing, and I trust this movement will lead to good results and force the Bulgarians to retire."

At the same time, Abdullah told me he had another Army Corps in reserve, the 17th, which was coming up from Tatarli, and that he would reinforce the 2nd Corps with it on the following morning.

Now what became of this mysterious 17th Corps which does not apparently exist in the Turkish organisation? Did Abdullah mean the 17th Division of Redifs? Whether it was a Division or a Provisional Army Corps, it never came to the assistance of the 2nd Army Corps on the following day, Wednesday, October 30th, and its movements have remained a profound mystery ever since. I was under the impression that it never reached the battlefield, but broke up and dispersed en route. I have, however, since heard from a reliable officer that this mysterious division or corps, instead of reinforcing the 2nd Army Corps, joined the 3rd Corps under Mahmoud Mukhtar and was involved in his fight and subsequent retreat.

That night I listened to many strange tales of the fighting, brought in by aides-de-camp from all quarters of the field. Most of these officers were highly optimistic, and prophesied a great victory on the following day, but there was one whose name I cannot recall who said to me:

"Things are not going well. Up to a certain hour the 2nd Army Corps was making considerable progress, but

the final Bulgarian attack drove it back. To-night there is tremendous concentration of the enemy in front of the 2nd Army Corps, and to-morrow we shall see the bloodiest fight of the battle there."

All the Turkish officers were loud in their praises of the bravery of the Bulgarian troops. They described how, when determined to gain a position, they came on regardless of their losses. Their bodies were literally piled up in heaps after the fight in front of the 2nd Corps.

Having bid good-night to Abdullah and having wished him every success on the morrow, the junior officers of the staff, Ismet and myself proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as we could for the night. We dispersed through the village, stole all the straw we could find and piled it up in the little room where we were to pass the night. It was not more than twelve feet square, and there were some sixteen of us to sleep there, as many staff officers, having come in with reports from other corps, were to remain at headquarters until the morning, and then to carry back fresh orders.

I remember that evening, in spite of our hunger, our anxieties and the general uncertainty of our position, we were all very cheerful and sat up for a long time telling stories and listening to each one's experiences during the day. One officer who had come in from Sali's Cavalry Division was better supplied than his comrades, and gave me a stick of chocolate, which helped to stave off the pangs of hunger just a little longer. Hardly any of us had any blankets and I was continually awakened during the night by the bitter cold, and I do not think any of us really slept except for half an hour at a time. However, the feeling of excitement and the prospects of further dramatic developments on the following day kept up our spirits and caused us to bear the cold and the ever-growing feeling of starvation without complaint.

CHAPTER XII

LULE BURGAS—THE SECOND DAY

I WILL now describe the second day of this disastrous battle, which has settled the fate of Turkey in Europe.

At dawn on Wednesday, October 30th, Abdullah Pasha and his staff were early astir. It was bitterly cold, but fortunately the weather remained fine and clear. All of us had passed a miserable, sleepless night, lying amidst the straw hastily collected on the previous evening. Neither the general nor anyone else had a scrap of breakfast or even a cup of tea, for not a morsel of food remained in the village of Sakiskeuy.

If this was the lot of the Commander-in-Chief of the army, imagine that of his troops. For three days the majority of the men had had absolutely nothing to eat, and very many of them but little to drink, as water in many parts of the field was scarce, and often whole regiments had to fill their bottles from muddy ponds, in which horses and oxen had trampled and stirred up the sediment. For three days the troops had lain out on the bare hills in the icy cold with no covering except their coats. The majority of the wounded lay exactly where they had fallen on the previous day, and only the minor cases had been able to drag themselves to the rear. But as there were no hospitals or field dressing stations, the wounded had to make their own way for fully

forty miles to Chorlou, before they could hope to find any succour. A few may have eventually reached shelter, thanks to the wonderful constitution of the Turkish soldier, but the majority must have succumbed en route.

If ever an army was not in a position to renew a battle, it was the Turkish army on the morning of Wednesday, October 30th. Without food, without ammunition for the artillery, without supports for the firing-line, it was obvious that nothing could stave off the disaster unless Mahmoud Mukhtar and the 3rd Corps could make a diversion on the enemy's left flank, or unless the Bulgarian offensive had spent its force, and they, too, were in as equally bad plight as the Turks.

Reports which had come in at dawn from Shefket Torgut Pasha, the commander of the 2nd Corps, showed that a great concentration of the enemy was taking place in front of his army corps between Turk Bey and Karagach. And to meet this fresh concentration Abdullah had not a single fresh battalion to throw into the firing line. Only one thing could save the day, namely, for the 2nd Corps to hold its own until Mahmoud Mukhtar and the 3rd Corps could come up.

I had a few words with Abdullah at dawn. He was calm, but it was easy to see that inwardly he was beset with anxiety. He asked me what I was going to do. I replied: "I shall stay with you, with your permission, to see the end of the battle, after which I shall try to make my way to Chorlou, where perhaps I shall find my horses." Abdullah replied: "Go straight out in front of the hills towards Turk Bey. There you will see the real struggle."

The general and his staff rode off. Ismet and myself followed the road they had taken, which led up to the low hills in front of Sakiskeuy. On my way I was amazed by the number of stragglers from the fighting line. Hundreds, even thousands, of men, who should have been with their regi-

ments, were strolling about the country, searching for food and taking no notice of the efforts of staff officers to induce them to return to the front. Many were in a pitiful state, so weak from two days' fighting and three without food, that they could hardly drag themselves along.

On the low hills in front of Sakiskeuy Abdullah and his staff took up their stand on an ancient mound about fifty feet high, of which there are many scattered over the country. They are said to be tombs marking the burial-places of the victims of former battles in this dark and bloody land. To-day this proved to be the tomb of Turkey's hopes, for from this mound Abdullah Pasha watched the defeat and destruction of his army.

Neither of the combatants seemed anxious to renew the struggle, and it was nearly eight a.m. before the Bulgarian artillery commenced a furious bombardment all along the line from Lule Burgas to Karagach. In spite of the immense expenditure of ammunition on the previous day, the enemy apparently had an unlimited supply left, for he did not use it sparingly, but fired with rapidity and precision.

Against this storm of shells the Turkish artillery could return but a feeble reply, for not a scrap of fresh ammunition had been brought up during the night, and those batteries which still possessed a few shells in their caissons were loth to use them until the decisive moment had arrived.

It was a sad sight to watch the long lines of infantry on the hills, a mile to our front, the batteries of artillery and the horse teams lying for hour after hour under this storm of shrapnel, unable to reply, unable to advance, and unwilling to retire. Men and horses fell in scores, and soon the dismal procession of wounded men, bleeding from feet, hands, faces, shoulders, from anywhere where the hurt was not vital, came dribbling back past us into the village of Sakiskeuy.

[*Photo Ismet Bey*

ARTILLERY ADVANCING TO SUPPORT THE HARD PRESSED 2ND ARMY CORPS AT LULE BURGAS.

The hill on which Abdullah Pasha had taken up his stand was about the centre of the arc of a semicircle, extending from the railway line at Lule Burgas station to Karagach, in the north-east. It speedily became obvious that the object of the Bulgarians was to break or turn the Turkish left flank, and if possible cut off the retirement of the army from Chorlou, and at the same time to crush Abdullah's centre, or at least, hold the 2nd Army Corps and prevent it from advancing.

The plan of Abdullah, the only one which offered the smallest hope of success, was to hold his left wing with the 4th and 1st Corps, to attack with his centre now formed by the 2nd Corps, and to crush the enemy's left wing by hurling the whole of the 3rd Corps under Mahmoud Mukhtar on to it. To gain time for the 3rd Corps to come up from Viza, Abdullah ordered Shefket Torgut Pasha, the commander of the 2nd Corps, to attack the enemy with his entire army corps, or what was left of it, united and massed on a small front.

The ground over which the troops had to advance to the attack was a plateau similar to those I have already described, only having this difference, that it was covered with very small trees and shrubbery, which gave a certain amount of concealment, but absolutely no cover against artillery fire.

This attack was supported by several batteries of artillery, which were pushed up close to the firing line, and in consequence suffered enormous losses. Abdullah, I fancy, had imagined that the enemy would take the offensive against the 2nd Corps, and, when they displayed no inclination to do so, he decided to take the offensive himself.

As a matter of fact, the Bulgarians, having suffered enormous losses in their final effort to hold the 2nd Corps on the previous night, had now entrenched themselves,

determined, as was proved later in the day, to act on the defensive in this part of the field, and furiously to attack Abdullah's left wing. Had the Turkish Commander-in-Chief had a fresh army corps in hand, or had he even possessed a spare division of infantry, some more batteries of artillery, or even ammunition for the batteries he did have, it is possible the attack of the 2nd Corps would have been crowned with success. But as it was, his troops were already worn out and decimated, his artillery had only a few rounds left, and the *moral* of the army had sunk to the lowest ebb.

Nevertheless, the troops of Shefket Torgut advanced bravely to the attack. A firing line, nearly half a mile long, was formed and swept forward over the open ground until it became almost hidden from view amidst the low shrubbery of which I have already spoken.

For a short time it really seemed to us spectators as if the advance would be successful, for the infantry pressed steadily, and only the enemy's artillery opposed the onrushing Turks. But suddenly a deafening roar of musketry rent the air, intermingled with the tragic hum of innumerable machine guns. The noise was infernal, but it only lasted for a short time.

Then suddenly there appeared rushing from the wooded ground the remnant of the Turkish firing-line. Full fifty per cent. had fallen, and the remainder, losing all semblance of order, dispersed in small groups, and under a perfect rain of shrapnel, dashed back on to the supports and reserves. Even here their flight did not end; for in spite of the efforts of the officers, the fugitives pressed on to the rear until they had reached safety behind the ground on which we were standing.

The supports and reserves of the broken firing-line were hurried to the front. They, too, reached the edge of the

wooded ground, where they were met in turn by such a hail of shrapnel and bullets that the lines seemed literally to melt away to nothing under the withering blast.

Two Turkish batteries, the only ones which seemed to possess any ammunition in this part of the field, attempted to relieve the pressure by opening up on the enemy's guns, but as the latter were invisible, it made not the slightest difference to their volume of fire. The only effect was to attract to the artillery some of the shrapnel which had played such havoc with the infantry. The two Turkish batteries were speedily placed out of action. One of them lost all its men except seven, and had 150 horses placed *hors de combat*. Fresh teams were sent up later in the day to bring them to the rear. I examined this battery carefully on the following day during the retreat. The shields were bespattered with shrapnel bullets, and an entire shell had passed through the shield of the gun.

Immediately after the failure of the attack of the 2nd Army Corps, I suggested to Ismet that we should ride to the position now held by the defeated Corps and examine the condition of the troops, and also endeavour to ascertain their losses. Ismet, however, pointed out that we had only one horse and that it would be very poor fun for the one who had to walk. I then said to him: "You stay here and I will go and have a look and will return in an hour." Ismet advised me not to go, saying I would probably get into trouble and might be mistaken by the ignorant soldiers for a Bulgarian.

However, I decided to go, and mounting the worn-out, half-starved old nag, was soon on my way. I was approaching my destination when I encountered some mounted Turkish soldiers accompanied by an officer. I was immediately seized by them in spite of my protestations. I showed them the badge which I should have worn on my

arm, but which I was carrying in my pocket. It made not the slightest difference. They seized me by each arm, took away my revolver and field glasses, and almost every odd and end I happened to have in my pocket. They then dragged me before Abdullah and his Staff, who laughed heartily and ordered my immediate release and the restitution of my few effects. Abdullah then sent for Ismet and told him he was not to allow me to go off alone again. There was no chance of this, as I had had quite enough.

The incidents I am now relating took place about twelve, midday. For the time being the forward movement of the 2nd Corps came to an abrupt stop, and the infantry fell back a considerable distance, where they remained for hours, exposed to the enemy's shrapnel fire, unable to advance and unwilling to retire.

While this desperate struggle was raging in front of the 2nd Corps the Bulgarians were engaged in delivering a series of equally desperate attacks on Abdullah's left wing and centre, held by the 4th Corps on the extreme left, and by the 1st Corps between Lule Burgas and Turk Bey. The brunt of this attack fell on the weakened 4th Corps, which the night before still held its entrenchments on the hills facing Lulu Burgas.

Here again, the Turkish defence was crushed by the immense superiority of the enemy's artillery fire. Here again, the old story was repeated of Turkish batteries unable to play any part in the battle from lack of ammunition. Here again, a half-starved and worn-out infantry were expected to fight like men.

Throughout the day the Bulgarian advance against the left wing made steady progress. Having gained possession of the railway station, they were able to outflank the 4th Corps and force it to retire, through fear of having its retreat cut off altogether.

The efforts of Sali Pasha's cavalry to stem the advance proved utterly futile. They in turn had to give way before the terrible rain of shell. The gradual outflanking and retirement of the 4th Corps was plainly visible to Abdullah and his staff in front of Sakiskeuy, from the clouds of smoke thrown up by the enemy's shells, which were now bursting over the left wing of the army, and threatened every minute to envelop our rear and jeopardise the retreat of the 1st and 2nd Corps on Chorlou.

By two o'clock in the afternoon the position of Abdullah's army was critical, almost desperate, and the glasses of the staff were all turned towards the north-east in the direction of Viza, from which point Mahmoud Mukhtar with the 3rd Corps was making tremendous efforts to come up. An engagement of a desultory character had been taking place in that direction throughout the morning, but the smoke of the bursting shells showed that up to the present the 3rd Corps had been making steady progress.

Messengers had arrived with the news that Mahmoud Mukhtar was driving all before him, that the enemy were becoming steadily demoralised in his front, and that he hoped to come up on the left of the 2nd Corps in the course of the afternoon.

This news temporarily raised the spirits of the General Staff, and for hours all our glasses and all our hopes were fixed on the 3rd Corps. About two o'clock this engagement to the north-east became furious. It was obvious that the Bulgarians had detached large reinforcements from the front of the 2nd Army Corps or else had brought up fresh troops, and had passed the right wing of the 2nd Corps, until they were almost in its rear and were concentrating every man in this part of the field to hold Mahmoud Mukhtar back.

In the whole course of the battle I never listened to such an artillery fire as that which arose from the contact of the

3rd Corps with the enemy. Mahmoud Mukhtar not having been engaged on the previous day, was able to employ his artillery to good advantage, and to meet the Bulgarian guns on more equal terms. But even here, in spite of its previous exertions and vast expenditure of ammunition, the Bulgarian artillery soon gained the upper hand.

Throughout the campaign the Creusot gun has proved its immense superiority over the Krupp in a manner which has amazed the Turkish artillery officers, but how far this superiority is due to the weapon and how far to superior handling it is premature to say.

Even the heroic efforts of Mahmoud's hitherto unbeaten infantry could not drive back the enemy, who fought with unparalleled determination and ferocity, absolutely throwing away their lives in the Japanese manner whenever a point had to be won or held.

About three o'clock in the afternoon it became obvious that Mahmoud Mukhtar's advance had been completely checked. The smoke of his guns no longer steadily approached the right flank of the 2nd Army Corps. Rather it seemed to recede, as if he were being slowly driven back. In any case the great gap between the 2nd and 3rd Corps had not been filled.

I will interrupt a further description of the day's fighting to present to the reader the hopeless position of the Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish army, directing as he was, or as he should have been directing, the movements of four army corps, ranged over a front of twenty-five miles. Abdullah remained throughout the entire day, except for one brief interval, on the mound of which I have already spoken. His sole companions were his staff and his personal escort, and his sole means of obtaining any information as to what was happening elsewhere were his pair of field glasses. Not a line of telegraph or telephone had been brought to the

front, and not a single wireless installation, although the Turkish army on paper possesses twelve complete outfits for its army corps; and not an effort had been made even to establish a line of messengers by relays to connect headquarters with the various army corps. I need hardly add that not a single aeroplane was anywhere within 100 miles of the front, and if any exist there was no one to fly them.

Thus, throughout the entire day, Abdullah remained for hour after hour without any exact information, except that which he obtained hours too late by dispatching various staff officers to his corps commanders. In the course of the day I only saw one orderly ride up with a message, from which I gather that the corps commanders did not even take the trouble to communicate with the Commander-in-Chief.

No one can blame Abdullah; it was not his fault; he was the victim of a vicious system of bluff and make-believe and self-deception which has brought such crushing disaster on Turkey in the present war. But in all my experience I have never seen a more pathetic or instructive spectacle than that of this Commander-in-Chief of more than 100,000 men sitting on the tomb of a former generation, as helpless as a blind-fold man, searching in vain for his enemy.

Thus the battle, instead of being directed by one master-mind, practically resolved itself into four isolated engagements with four separate commanders, each completely ignorant of his comrade's movements, and each having the same difficulty as his Commander-in-Chief in communicating with his divisional and brigade commanders.

At about four o'clock I received the first tidings of the other correspondents. Suddenly Lionel James's dragoman and his groom came up riding two horses. I was extremely surprised to see them and asked for their news. They told me that several of the correspondents who had been

imprisoned at Chorlou ever since their arrival at the front, had broken loose that morning at the sound of the guns and were making every effort to reach the battlefield. Lionel James himself, so his dragoman told me, had left for Lule Burgas by motor-car, and he had sent on his two horses with orders to make for that town with all rapidity. Of course, he did not know when he gave these instructions that the town had been captured. I told the dragoman he was some eight kilometres from Lule Burgas, and he asked me what I thought he should do, saying plaintively, "It has taken me eight hours to come from Chorlou here, and I can't wander all over the battlefield in search of Mr. James, who may be anywhere now, and in two hours it will be quite dark." There was truth in this, and I advised him to remain with myself and Ismet, as Lionel James would probably try to make his way to headquarters. But no advice or words of mine would have changed the dragoman's resolution to remain under my protection. He was delighted beyond measure at finding himself amongst friends once again. On the way up he had been arrested by parties of soldiers who had threatened him, and he was half scared to death. Later in the afternoon Ismet and myself commandeered the two horses and rode a mile to visit the 2nd Army Corps. I also learnt from this dragoman some interesting news of the trials, sufferings, and indignities which all the correspondents had suffered since their departure from Constantinople. He told me that both the motor-car of the *Daily Mail* and *Times* and my own had reached Chorlou safely on the previous day, and that Donohoe had left Chorlou and had gone down to Rodosto in ours in search of more petrol. To my unspeakable regret this man had brought no food with him, so we were but little better off.

I will now describe the dramatic closing stage of this

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

THE TURKISH RETREAT.

battle, which may prove to be one of the decisive battles of the world. I have already said that by three o'clock in the afternoon Mahmoud Mukhtar's advance had been completely checked, and that he was being slowly driven back. Abdullah and the General Staff recognised clearly that the situation was almost desperate, unless something could be done at the eleventh hour to change the fortunes of the day. Napoleon at Waterloo never waited more anxiously for Grouchy to come up, than did Abdullah for the advance of Mahmoud Mukhtar, and now it was obvious that the battle was lost unless the enemy's line in front of the 2nd Army Corps could be broken.

Let me describe once again the position of the Turkish army at this hour. The left wing was completely enveloped owing to the repulse and retirement of the 4th Corps. The 1st Corps, next in line, was gradually giving way, whilst the 2nd, although still holding its own under tremendous artillery fire, seemed incapable of any further offensive movement. On the extreme right and in the rear of the line the 3rd Corps was also held in check. Thus, should Mahmoud Mukhtar be still driven back, and should the 4th and 1st Corps retire much farther, the 2nd Corps in the centre of the arc of the semicircle would be in danger of being cut off and enveloped on both its wings.

However, on the other hand, the strategical position of the Bulgarians was also extremely dangerous, because they had been obliged to detach a large portion of their forces, and of their artillery, from the extreme left wing, to check the advance of the 3rd Corps. Thus the Bulgarians had passed the right flank of the 2nd Army Corps, and were almost in its rear.

Now Abdullah still had a chance of retrieving the fortunes of the day, if he could successfully attack the enemy in front of the 2nd Army Corps, because if this attack was

successful and forced the enemy to retire, the Bulgarian force attacking Mahmoud and the 3rd Corps would be taken in flank and rear, and its retreat entirely cut off from the rest of the army. Attacked in front by Mahmoud, and in the rear by Shefket Torgut, its position would have been critical in the extreme.

Again, as in the morning, had the Turkish general had but a fresh corps in hand and a few batteries of artillery the day might have been saved. Nevertheless Abdullah, like Napoleon at Waterloo with his Old Guard, determined to risk all on one final effort with the exhausted 2nd Corps.

Staff officers were sent to order an immediate advance. The wearied troops, their *moral* half gone under the terrible rain of shells to which they had been subjected throughout the day, once more pulled themselves together and advanced over the ground covered with corpses of their comrades.

This time no single firing line with supports was formed. The whole corps, or what was left of it, moved forward in close formation to the edge of the plateau, where disaster had overtaken them in the morning. No sooner had this movement begun than the enemy sighted it, and I am told that no fewer than twelve batteries of artillery concentrated their fire on the doomed troops. The white puffs of smoke burst in an unceasing stream above the serried columns, which were met by a fearful storm of musketry and mitrailleuse which no troops could face. The column seemed to be bathing in a surf of shrapnel. The ranks wavered, then broke, and made precipitously for the rear.

In vain did those behind attempt to check the rush. No amount of reinforcements could have brought success at this moment. The Turkish soldier was being asked to do more than human nature could stand.

Having regained the old ground which they had held all day, the fugitives halted, and some semblance of order was

restored to the ranks, and the corps held its ground for two hours until darkness set in.

Now it was obvious to all that the battle was irretrievably lost, and the important question was: Could the half-destroyed corps hold their ground until the following morning, or would they be obliged to retire during the night?

About half-past five Abdullah Pasha and his staff, seeing that the game was up, left the mound on which they had stood all day, and returned to the village of Sakiskeuy. I took a final glance round the field of battle. Everywhere it was obvious that the Grand Army of Thrace had been beaten, and was in full retreat or else barely holding its ground. The artillery fire still continued, and the smoke of the shells both to the north and south seemed almost to envelop both its wings, leaving clear only a gap right in our rear.

Ismet and I rode over to the ground where the 2nd Corps had been fighting throughout the day. The dead and wounded littered the soil in every direction, and the survivors sat around with a hopeless, listless look on their faces, all fully realising that the battle was lost. We soon had to return on account of the enemy's shells, which never ceased to play over the Turkish position until complete darkness, at six o'clock, put an end to the struggle.

Both armies were too worn out to molest one another during the night.

During the day Ismet and myself had been too busy following the various phases of this stupendous combat to realise our own plight, but now it had come to an end a reaction from the intense excitement speedily set in, and pangs of hunger brought home to us the realisation of our own position. During the entire day we had not had a morsel of food or anything to drink except dirty water, and

now darkness had set in we were without either food or shelter for the night, intensely weary, and with only one equally tired old horse between us.

The General had told us in the morning that we could pass the night again with the staff, but on arriving once again in Sakiskeuy we found only Abdullah's servant, who had been wounded in the head on the previous day, at the house which the staff had occupied. This man told us he had received orders to pack up Abdullah's baggage and to be ready to leave at any moment for a destination he did not know.

This was the final straw, and Ismet and myself both felt on the verge of despair. Without horses it would be impossible to retreat with the staff, and we both felt that, weakened as we were from want of food, it would be impossible for us to make our way on foot the fifty odd miles to Chorlou, the nearest point where we could hope to find food or horses. We asked the Mushir's servant if he could obtain us any food, but he only replied, " There is none to be had. The only thing my master has had to eat all day has been a toasted mealie cob. There is absolutely nothing left in the countryside."

I sat down on a chair, and Ismet did likewise, both of us too apathetic to care what happened, and both too weary to move another yard. I remember an endless procession of wounded men passing through the village, some dragging themselves along, others carried on improvised stretchers, others supporting one another, others falling to the ground as soon as they saw a pile of hay on which to throw themselves.

I also recollect seeing some desperate cases brought up to a surgeon, who was gesticulating wildly, explaining, Ismet told me, that it was useless bringing them to him as he had no bandages, no medicine, and no means of performing any

operation. The stretcher-bearers—hurdle-bearers, as it would be better to call them—took them to the nearest house, and left them inside.

Yet throughout all these horrid scenes I never heard even a groan or a reproach escape from the sufferers. Each seemed to realise that his number was up, and accepted his hard lot with superb dignity and fortitude. Shortly afterwards a dying officer was brought in and laid in Abdullah's house, as no accommodation could be found elsewhere.

I sat debating in my mind what to do. At that moment I would have paid any price for a couple of good horses, for a biscuit, or for a bottle of whiskey. I thought how ironical it seemed that I should be sitting there with £200 in gold strapped round my waist, and yet be unable to buy even a cigarette. It is surprising how quickly one becomes apathetic to the sufferings of others, when one is faced with necessity oneself, and even the lot of the wounded aroused but little interest amongst those of us who were unhurt.

It was now a question of *sauve qui peut*, and that feeling had taken possession of the whole army. I had almost made up my mind to pass the night in Sakiskeuy, and in the morning to surrender to the Bulgarians, rather than make any further effort requiring physical exertion.

I was sitting there, half asleep in the semi-darkness, when I suddenly heard my brother's voice calling me by name. I looked up, and there, to my unutterable amazement, I saw my brother riding a horse, Sir Bryan Leighton on another, a young English photographer called Gordon mounted on a third, two or three servants and grooms, and a covered-in country cart loaded to the brim with tents and baggage.

Had a celestial caravan suddenly tumbled from the skies I could not have been more surprised, and, for a few moments,

I thought I had been dreaming. My brother told me afterwards that the only question I asked him was, "Have you brought any food and drinks?"

To the infinite joy of Ismet and myself, they had brought supplies for three days. Without waiting to ask any questions, we rushed to the wagon and devoured anything in sight. Then it occurred to me to inquire of my brother how they had happened to turn up in Sakiskeuy, and whence they had come.

This is the story they told me.

All the correspondents since their arrival at the front had been locked up in Chorlou and closely guarded. They were all so closely guarded that sentries were even placed round their camp. On the night that Ismet and myself arrived in Chorlou all were safely quartered in houses in the town, and yet this fact was unknown to Abdullah Pasha and his staff when they sent us on to Lule Burgas.

On Tuesday the sound of the guns of the great battle aroused all the prisoners to frenzy, and they determined to break way on the following morning and make their own way to the battlefield. The officer in charge of them, hearing of this project, said he would conduct them himself to Lule Burgas, being ignorant that the town had fallen into the hands of the Bulgarians, and he gave a general rendezvous for half-past seven.

But the more enterprising Englishmen, especially, had lost all faith in Turkish promises, and long before that hour the Anglo-Saxon section had cleared out, and were well on their way to the front

My brother bought a cart, harnessed my two strongest horses to drag it, and made for Lule Burgas. By one of those strange chances which cannot be explained, they took the wrong road, and instead of arriving at Lule Burgas, or near it, they wandered quite by accident into

[*Photo Ismet Bey*

RETIREMENT OF THE 2ND ARMY CORPS AT LULE BURGAS.

the village of Sakiskeuy, where they found us in such dire distress.

But for this accident I do not know what would have become of us on the following day. I do not think I could ever have reached Chorlou on foot, and certainly not in time to send my account of the battle to the *Daily Telegraph.*

The arrival of food, tents, and our baggage soon caused us to forget all our miseries and misfortunes, and, as all the houses were occupied, we pitched a tent, collected some corn for the horses, which had done forty miles that day over bad roads, and proceeded to cook our evening meal.

About eight o'clock Ismet came to me and said: "Abdullah has returned with his staff. They are once more in the house, and do not intend to leave to-night, but all are starving, and have not so much as a loaf of bread between them."

I collected half our stores, had a hot kettle of cocoa made, and carried them to Abdullah Pasha myself. It was indeed a pleasure, at such a moment, to be able to repay in some small measure his many acts of kindness and hospitality towards Ismet and myself. The General was sitting on the floor of his little room, surrounded by his staff, and with many general officers, including Shefket Torgut Pasha, who had been summoned to a council of war.

Abdullah Pasha looked worn out and cast down. The faces of all present reflected the deepest depression, almost amounting to despair, and if any further confirmation were needed as to the plight of the army, it was to be found in the appearance of the Headquarters Staff.

The Commander-in-Chief rose when I entered and explained my mission, and thanked me profusely, saying that, without my coming to his aid, he would have been obliged to go without any supper. I wished him success, and expressed a hope that the enemy, exhausted by their

exertions, would be found to have retreated on the following day. Abdullah Pasha merely shook his head and replied: "I am afraid not. Our army has made tremendous sacrifices, especially the officers, of whom the majority have fallen, including some of the youngest and most promising."

Then I withdrew. Ismet remained behind to talk with some of his friends on the staff, and a little later returned to my tent and asked if I could let Abdullah have a little brandy. We searched the wagon in vain. In the general confusion of an early morning departure it had been forgotten, and also the whiskey, but fortunately Sir Bryan Leighton had half a bottle on him. We sent half of this by Ismet to Abdullah, who sent back word to say it was the best drink he had ever tasted.

Sir Bryan Leighton and my brother told me of the alarming state of the army they had passed on their way to the front. They calculated they had passed at least seven thousand wounded men dragging themselves to the rear on foot, and thousands of stragglers fleeing, many having thrown away their arms. They told me that regiments leaving Chorlou for the front, melted away to the size of companies before they had gone half-a-dozen miles, and that even these fresh troops had been two days without food. They were amazed by what they had seen, having been told in Chorlou that everywhere the army was victorious and the Bulgarians beaten back.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ROUT

It now remains for me to describe the last tragic day in the break-up of Abdullah Pasha's army, of how the troops who had faced every adverse condition and who had fought heroically throughout three days, finally gave way under the strain of starvation and exposure, and each man, thinking only of his own salvation, sought safety in flight.

At five a.m. on Thursday, October 31st, I was aroused by Ismet shaking me. These were the words he whispered in my ear, not wishing to disturb the other weary sleepers in the tent: "Come outside quickly! We can stay here no longer. Abdullah and his staff have left. The village has been evacuated. At any minute the Bulgarians may enter."

I was astonished at the news, because it seemed so strange that no member of the staff had warned us when they left, but I suppose in the general confusion of a sudden departure we had been forgotten. I lost not a moment, but aroused the camp and set everyone to work packing the wagon and harnessing the horses. Just as dawn was breaking, a rattle of musketry from the hills outside the village from which I had watched the fight on the previous day showed that

the Bulgarians were already advancing, and that the rear guard was engaged.

Everyone had cleared out of Sakiskeuy during the night, with the exception of the seriously wounded, who were unable to move. They were abandoned to the mercies of the villagers or else to the care of the enemy.

By six o'clock we were packed and on the march, and just as we cleared the village the enemy's guns roared. Then we found ourselves amidst a crowd of stragglers and wounded, ox-wagons, stray batteries of artillery, and all the manifold *débris* of a defeated army. All had one object in view, namely, to put as great a distance as possible between themselves and the enemy.

We decided to take the road to a village called Ahmed Bey, six miles behind Sakiskeuy, where we were told we would find Abdullah Pasha and his staff; but on reaching Ahmed Bey we found the village had been evacuated and was only filled with stragglers and wounded. I therefore decided to make for Chorlou, forty miles away, and to endeavour to reach it that night.

The country from Sakiskeuy to Chorlou is the same broad undulating plateau, dotted with villages and traversed by innumerable bridle-paths, nothing in the nature of a high road existing. Almost all these roads or paths converge on Chorlou, and every one of them was blocked with the fugitives of three beaten army corps. Behind us we could hear, from the noise of the guns, the bursting of shells ever nearer our rear, and the incessant rattle of musketry, that a desperate rear-guard action was taking place, and the sound nerved us on to fresh exertions. Away to the east a pitched battle seemed to be raging, showing that Mahmoud Mukhtar, with the 3rd Corps, was making desperate efforts to retire from the exposed position in which he had been placed by the break-up of the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Army Corps.

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

WOUNDED TURKISH SOLDIERS IN BULLOCK-WAGONS.

I do not know to this hour if the retreat was ordered by Abdullah Pasha, or if the troops voluntarily abandoned their positions and took to flight. Probably an orderly retreat was arranged, but speedily developed into a *sauve qui peut.*

The scenes on the road baffle description from my pen. They recalled to mind a picture I have seen somewhere of the flight of the French army after Waterloo, or one of Napoleon's retreats from Russia. Not a vestige of order remained. Whole brigades and divisions had broken up. The men made no efforts to preserve their places in the ranks. The strongest speedily got to the front, and the weak, sick, and wounded struggled painfully behind. Thousands of wounded made pathetic efforts to keep up with their comrades, but each had to shift for himself, as not even the unwounded were in a condition to lend a helping hand. Many of the unwounded were so weak that they fell by the roadside and made no further effort to save themselves.

For three days all these men had been without a morsel of food, and many for even a longer period. Only soldiers possessing the wonderful constitutions of the Turks could have stood the strain. As our wagon lumbered along amidst the ruts, at times threatening to collapse altogether, many a wounded man begged for a lift, holding up their hands imploringly. It was awful having to refuse them, for once we had taken two inside, the cart would not hold another person, and as it was, the worn-out horses could hardly drag it along. At times we dismounted and gave exhausted officers a lift on our horses, for which they were profoundly thankful.

We distributed the remains of our food to the starving, but amongst such a multitude our little store could only supply the wants of a very few. When we came to a village some way away from the battlefield we were obliged

even to abandon our two wounded men to the care of some wagon-drivers, as the horses began to show signs of breaking down.

The further we receded from the battlefield, the worse the scene became, because many of the wounded, having dragged themselves thus far, could go no further, and, crawling off the track, lay down to die by the roadside without a curse or reproach at the authors of all their miseries. Sometimes when a man had died his comrades would stop a moment and dig a shallow grave, but the majority of the corpses were left just where they fell.

Amidst the fugitives were many country-people fleeing from the tide of war; many great trains of ox-wagons, creaking painfully along; many stray batteries of artillery, with the horses so lean that they could hardly drag the guns, and with the exhausted gunners asleep on the limbers. Amidst these thousands of fugitives, the remnants of three army corps, hardly an officer remained.

At the commencement of the campaign the Turkish army was no fewer than 2,000 short of its proper quota of officers. Its loss in officers in this great battle was enormous, and in consequence whole battalions were left like sheep without a shepherd. If ever officers are most necessary, it is when troops get out of hand, as they did on this retreat, but without officers it was impossible even to attempt to restore some semblance of order amongst the flying horde.

On the road we were met by fresh bodies of troops coming from Chorlou, on their way to the front, and ignorant of the great disaster. They, too, joined in the flight, and speedily deserted their ranks and dispersed. At every village crowds of stragglers invaded the houses in search of food, digging up roots in the gardens and eagerly devouring raw cabbages and turnips—anything edible they could find.

Every stream of water was turned into a mud-pond by the general rush of men, horses, and oxen to be the first to obtain a drink.

After we had marched for several hours, and had placed a considerable distance between ourselves and the enemy, we halted for half-an-hour to give the horses a rest, but, with this exception, we never once stopped, except when obliged to do so by the block on the roads, between six a.m. and ten o'clock at night.

On the high ground, half way to Chorlou, we had a good view of the whole of the countryside, which presented a most extraordinary sight. Along every road men, horses, guns, and ox-wagons were pressing forward, all converging on to the two roads which lead into Chorlou. There must have been forty or fifty thousand stragglers scattered over the plain, all bent on reaching the town before nightfall. Many became so exhausted from want of food that they simply could not go any further, and lay down to sleep where they were. What became of them I do not know. I suppose a large number came in the next day. Others were doubtless captured by the enemy, and the majority of the wounded left on the bare plateau, swept by an icy wind, must have perished during the night.

I have no time to relate here the varied tales of the great fight told us by the fugitives—of whole battalions cut to pieces by the enemy's fire; of men starving in the ranks or dying of exposure; of thousands of Bulgarians slaughtered in the attacks; of artillery captured; of guns abandoned; of the mistakes of Generals; of the awful confusion and lack of method which prevailed everywhere.

Many of the fugitives had abandoned their kits and equipment to lighten their burdens. A still larger number flung away their boots, preferring to march with bare feet. But to their credit let it be said that very few abandoned

their rifles. One old, worn-out soldier with nothing left except his beloved Mauser, and so weak that he could hardly stumble along, said to Ismet as we passed: "A Turkish soldier is not worth the price of a dog these days."

We were yet a long way from Chorlou when night hid from view these horrid scenes of human misery. If our progress had been difficult before, it now became infinitely more so, and finally, as a crowning misfortune, a wheel came off our cart.

The screw was lost and we searched for it in vain in the dark. But as we had no certain proof that it had not come off some way back we were obliged to abandon the quest as hopeless. For some little time we contemplated spending the night on the road and going on to Chorlou on the following morning, but all our servants were dead against this, as they were anxious to obtain food and shelter. The faithful Hadji then suggested that he could tie on the wheel of the cart and although it would not go round any longer he thought the horses would be able to drag it into Chorlou, exhausted though they were. There was no alternative, so we accepted his proposal although it seemed extremely cruel to ask the two horses to drag a heavily laden wagon five miles on three wheels. I do not know how we ever got over this last stretch of the road. It was pitch dark and over and over again the cart was on the verge of turning over on account of the deep ruts and banks which we were obliged to negotiate. At length, about nine p.m., we came to the bridge spanning the river which had to be passed in order to enter the town. Here the scene absolutely baffles description. The only road leading to the bridge was completely blocked by an immense train of ox-wagons, refugees' carts, stray commissariat wagons, soldiers, and masses of men having no semblance of order. We saw at once that it would be utterly impossible to hope to get across the

PASSING THE BRIDGE AT CHORLOU AFTER THE ROUT OF LULE BURGAS. [*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

bridge that evening, and that if we were to obtain food and supper we would have to find another way round. The only alternative course was to ford the river beneath the bridge, but this was not an encouraging outlook because some of the ox-wagons had already tried the ford, and had stuck in the mud in the middle of the stream. However, Ismet, my brother, and myself plunged in the river and found the water only up to our girths, and we called upon the party to follow. It was a desperate experiment, but the faithful Hadji was equal to the occasion. Calling upon Allah to protect him and to give his horses ten times their normal strength, he took the river at a rush, and after a fearful struggle the cart somehow got through and mounted the further bank, amid shouts of joy. The following day a French correspondent tried to get his cart over the bridge and was pushed over the side, losing his cart, his horses, and his dragoman.

But our difficulties were not at an end even after we had crossed the stream and our efforts to regain the road almost ended in further disaster and we were very nearly pushed over an embankment, but by a miracle we escaped. After that we crossed the railway line and soon found ourselves in Chorlou, where at least we had a temporary home. Throughout the day we had all been wondering why the Bulgarians had not pursued the masses of fugitives streaming over the open plain without any semblance of order, who would have offered no resistance had they been attacked. But the Bulgarian infantry were exhausted after their tremendous exertions, and the cavalry of the Bulgarian army is almost non-existent. But what a unique opportunity was lost of finishing off the war then and there! How fortunate it was for the Turks that the Bulgarians had no cavalry at hand with which to pursue the beaten army over the broad undulating plain between Lule Burgas and

Chorlou! Had a few brigades been let loose on this mass of fugitives, thousands of prisoners would have been captured, and I would never have escaped to write this account of the battle. The thousands of fugitives crowded on to the banks of the river at Chorlou, who had only one bridge over which they could pass, would have been at the mercy of the cavalry, and, had the latter possessed a few batteries of horse artillery, it is awful to contemplate the disaster which would have ensued. But these things were not to be, and the Army of Thrace was allowed to retire on the lines of Chataldja without a shot being fired. But the lesson is obvious. Had the Bulgarians been able to follow up their victory, they could have occupied the famous lines almost without firing a shot, they would not have lost both time and men in their abortive attempt to carry the works three weeks later, and Constantinople would have been captured from Islam after an occupation of six hundred years.

Looking back on the great *débâcle* now, the more natural does it seem.

As long as I remained in Constantinople and was unable to see with my own eyes the true state of the army, I was perforce obliged to accept the Turkish tales of its readiness for war.

But from the very moment I arrived amongst the troops the great bubble burst, and the great illusion was shattered. I found that the military authorities in Constantinople had deliberately deceived the outside world, and had embarked on a gigantic system of calculated lying in order to keep the truth from coming out, hoping against hope that the bravery and determination of the Turkish soldier would pull them through at the eleventh hour.

The responsibility for the disaster cannot be laid on the Turkish soldier. He in innumerable instances has proved himself as brave as ever he was, and only his stubborn

determination and unparalleled hardiness prolonged the battle of Sakiskeuy throughout three days. The responsibility rests solely on the administrative classes and high officials, who, eaten up with pride and self-confidence, and regarding all the Balkan States with the utmost contempt, believed the Turkish army to be invincible. The army was caught utterly unprepared for war, and the military authorities remained blind in their belief that mere numbers set forth on paper and published broadcast in the Press would win the day against an army smaller in numbers, but which had been carefully organising and preparing for war for twenty-five years.

It is impossible for me to describe severely enough the utter state of chaos, of mess, muddle, and make-believe, which exists throughout all branches of the army. Had the Turkish soldier been supplied with even one biscuit a day he might have held his ground against the invader, and I am convinced that he has been defeated more by sheer starvation than by any other single factor.

Looking back on the great tragedy, it is almost impossible to understand how the wretched private soldier existed for three days without a scrap of food, without any shelter, and yet covered himself with glory. The most splendid material has been sacrificed on the altar of stupidity, conceit, self-satisfaction, and the grossest ineptitude.

The Turkish army has no general staff capable of running a country circus. The army has no generals who seem to have grasped even the most elementary principles of modern warfare. The army has no commissariat-train of any sort, and yet four army corps were despatched on a vast offensive movement. With a whole line of railway behind them, within fifty miles of the capital, the authorities could not feed a brigade, and, realising this fact, they, with true

Oriental apathy, made no effort to feed four army corps, but left them to starve, trusting to Allah to produce manna and quails from the skies, and water from the rocks.

The greatest battle of modern times was entered on under these conditions, with an utter, callous disregard of the consequences. The victims were marched to the slaughter without the smallest preparation having been made to succour the wounded. Not a field dressing-station existed, not a field hospital was established, and the few surgeons up at the front lacked every necessity, and were obliged to see thousands of wounded pass to their doom who might otherwise have been saved, without being able to lift a finger to help them.

The artillery was sent into action with a few hours' supply of shells and not a reserve within fifty miles, with the result that on the second day of the battle the Turkish soldier had to fight practically unsupported by this arm.

Whole battalions and brigades of ignorant peasants from Anatolia were sent to Constantinople, dressed up in khaki, handed a rifle, some hundreds of rounds of ammunition, kits which they hardly knew how to fit to their backs, counted at the railway station with glee by the authorities, and officially described as "our invincible infantry."

Thousands of these men had never had a Mauser rifle in their hands, and had to be shown how to use it under the enemy's fire. Entire battalions, unused to this new arm, and never having been trained to shoot, would loose off all their ammunition in a short hour, and only hit the ground fifty yards in front of them, inflicting absolutely no damage on the enemy.

I never saw a single Turkish machine-gun in action, and if they exist I do not know what became of them.

The Bulgarian artillery played a matchless *rôle* in the action. It overwhelmed the Turkish defence, and crushed

every offensive movement by the rapidity and deadly accuracy of its fire. The number of guns, which the Bulgarians were able to bring into action, astounded the Turks, and the way in which they replenished their ammunition supply was a masterpiece of organisation.

The fire of their machine-guns, of which they possessed great numbers, was also extremely deadly, and played a very important part in the victory. The heroic courage of the Bulgarians excited the admiration of their opponents.

A new military power has arisen in Eastern Europe, which even the Great Powers will not be able to disregard, to threaten, or to attempt to coerce.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW WE SENT THE STORY OF THE BATTLE

It is all very well for a war correspondent to see a battle and to note carefully what has happened throughout the whole struggle and during the retreat, but his exertions are absolutely wasted, unless he is able to dispatch the news to his paper without delay and before his rivals. This is the only way that the paper can obtain any adequate return for the large sum of money spent in fitting him out, buying him motor-cars and horses, and sending him to the front.

I reached the house my brother had taken at Chorlou at ten o'clock on Thursday evening. I was very tired after the last four days of sustained exertion, little sleep, and semi-starvation, and my natural inclination was to have a good dinner and then to lie down and go to sleep until I woke up again. But I knew I could not allow fatigue or hunger to overwhelm me at this critical juncture. I knew I must find out at once exactly what had become of all the other correspondents, but more especially of Lionel James and Donohoe, whose enterprise I feared.

Therefore, immediately on my arrival, my brother took me round to the house where he had last left James and Donohoe. By banging on the door we obtained admittance to Donohoe's room, where we found him asleep in bed, or rather on the verge of going to sleep. He was

immensely surprised and pleased to see me again, as we had not met since he left Constantinople, and he knew nothing of my movements, except that he had heard vaguely that I had reached the front. Donohoe told me that all that day he had been out in the motor-car watching the retreat, and that on the previous day, Wednesday, he had been obliged to rush down to Rodosto to buy some more petrol, as the supply we had brought to the front had given out. He gave me a very sketchy account at the time—as we had more important matters to discuss—of his adventures in the car; of how it had stuck, and how he thought at one moment that it would be necessary to abandon it altogether. But the most welcome news of all was the safety of the car and the fact that he had secured sufficient petrol to carry us back to Constantinople if necessary.

Then I asked for news of James, and what Donohoe told me of his movements was profoundly disquieting. He said that James had left Chorlou in his motor car that morning, and had gone down to Rodosto, evidently with the intention of making his way to Constantinople by steamer. Of course, I knew from this that James had not witnessed the retreat of the army, and therefore could have no clear idea of the result of the battle except what he had learnt from being present at it on the Wednesday.

We then considered the question carefully. It was obvious that James must arrive in Constantinople ahead of Donohoe and myself, provided he could find a steamer, and that he could thus send a censored account of the battle to *The Times* from Constantinople, before we could send a censored one from the same place to the *Daily Telegraph* or to the *Daily Chronicle.* On the other hand, the last boat left Constantinople for Constanza on that day, Thursday, at three p.m., and there would not be another until the same hour on Saturday. It was, therefore, absolutely

impossible for James to send an uncensored despatch by the Thursday's boat and unless he hired a special steamer he would have to wait until Saturday afternoon. The fact that he could send a censored despatch from Constantinople ahead of us caused me but little anxiety, as in view of the Turkish defeat it was quite obvious that such a despatch would be of small value, as the Censor would never allow the true facts to be known.

Therefore, Donohoe and I were faced with this problem: Could we reach Constantinople on Saturday morning in time to catch the steamer at three p.m. for Constanza? If we could do this, it would be impossible for James to get anything of value in *The Times* ahead of us. We decided that at all costs we must make the attempt, and debated long into the night, which would be the wisest route to take and the one which offered the largest number of chances of success. At first we thought of starting at daylight and motoring the whole way down to Constantinople, as we just had enough petrol for such a trip, but I vetoed this idea and Donohoe quite agreed with me after I had given him a cursory review of my experiences on the way up. It is true that it had not rained for five days and that, therefore, the roads were in better condition; but, if we punctured a tyre or if the fool of a chauffeur made the smallest mistake, we would be liable to be stranded on the road without any possible means of reaching our destination.

We decided that there was only one possible course which offered the least chance of success, and that was to motor down to Rodosto at dawn the next morning, Friday, and to take the chance of finding a steamer going to Constantinople, or else to hire a tug or even to take a sailing vessel as a very last resource. Donohoe undertook to have the motor ready at seven a.m.; it was no use trying to start any earlier as there would not be enough light. I asked Donohoe if

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

A Halt during the Retreat.

he had any news of the other correspondents, but, although he knew nothing for certain, it was quite obvious that none of them could have stolen a march on us, even if they had seen anything of the battle, and, therefore, our minds were set at rest.

My brother and I then returned to our house, where we found Goupa had prepared an excellent dinner, the first good meal I had tasted since I had left Constantinople.

Of course I told Ismet nothing of my intention of leaving the front, because it would have placed him in an awkward position, as he was semi-officially charged with looking after me, although I knew perfectly well that personally he had no objection to my leaving the front. It has often been brought up against war correspondents attached to the Turkish Army, that they deliberately disobeyed the orders of the authorities and broke their own written word by leaving the army without permission. But this is quite untrue. I only signed with the stipulation that I would remain as long as I could carry out my work in a satisfactory manner and be of some value to the *Daily Telegraph*. None of these conditions existed. I had no idea where to find the Censor, even if I had desired to do so. If I found him and showed him a despatch, there was no possible means of sending it off from the front, as there was no French or English operator and all messages would have to be dispatched in Turkish.

Also the conditions had entirely changed. The Turkish forces as an army had ceased to exist, and although we were supposed to be attached to headquarters, it was impossible for us to find headquarters, as they were now in full flight somewhere down the line to Constantinople. Again all the correspondents had dispersed and were on their own, each doing his best to send off the full news of the disaster before his rivals. Lastly, there was no question of giving away

military secrets, as nothing I or anyone else could write was as bad as the truth, which would at once be made known to the whole world through Bulgarian channels.

In the circumstances the reckless charges made against all correspondents by a certain Mr. Bennet in the *Nineteenth Century* are childish in the extreme. I never met this gentleman and know nothing of him. I see he claims to have been appointed a Censor by the Turkish military authorities. I never heard of his appointment in Constantinople, and he certainly never saw any of our despatches, as we would not for a moment have tolerated such an interference from an outsider. He was certainly never at the front with the correspondents, so I am quite unable to say where he carried on his duties. But I am amazed to learn from his article in the *Nineteenth Century*, that an Englishman could have been found to do this donkey work for an oriental race, namely, to censor the despatches of his fellow countrymen.

I have since learned that Mr. Bennet is an Oxford Don who was once employed as a war correspondent himself.

But to continue my narrative. That night I did not retire to rest until very late, as I had to make all my preparations to be off at dawn. Thus it seemed to me I had hardly been asleep more than a few minutes, when the faithful Goupa was shaking me by the shoulder and whispering in my ear that it was five a.m. I never felt less inclined to turn out of bed, but there was no help for it, and, cursing my hard lot, I proceeded to dress. By seven a.m. I was ready, when I heard the toot of the motor coming to a stop in front of the door.

Now it had been carefully arranged on the previous evening that in no circumstances was the motor-car to come round to my house, through fear of waking Ismet; besides which, we did not wish to wake up the entire town,

and thus announce the news of our departure. We were afraid that we might be stopped by some officer, or by gendarmes, or that some unknown trouble would cross our path and ruin our chances of bringing off a *coup*, at the eleventh hour. Goupa was hastily dispatched to send the motor back to Donohoe's house, and I followed it a few minutes later with my few belongings.

I found Donohoe sitting in the car and fuming at the mouth because it had attracted an immense concourse of spectators, who completely surrounded him and shouted with glee at any strange noise it made. He said to me in an agonised voice, "Come quickly, we shall certainly be stopped unless we get off at once." I lost no time and the next minute we were tearing out of Chorlou, which I was never destined to see again during the campaign, pursued by a crowd of children. We passed the sentries without being questioned or stopped, and once we had obtained the open country beyond we were able to breathe more freely again.

It is only about 35 kilometres from Chorlou to Rodosto, and the road is rather better than it is customary to find in Thrace, so we were able to make rapid progress. But I must confess I was more nervous on this ride than on any previous occasion, because I felt that my labours were for the time being at an end, that success lay within my reach, and I trembled lest at the last moment a smash up on the road should dash all my hopes to the earth once more. To make matters worse, the chauffeur, a bad driver at any time, who invariably selected the worst part of the road, was in a peculiarly reckless mood that morning and seemed to take a fiendish glee in bringing us to the brink of disaster, but our luck was in and, except for one short delay to extricate the car from a ravine full of mud which had not dried, we reached Rodosto without incident.

But, just as we were entering the town, our spirits once

more fell to zero. We heard the whistle of a steamer and saw a small vessel rapidly leaving the shore and making in the direction of Constantinople. Donohoe groaned aloud. "That is the tug I proposed to hire," he exclaimed. "Someone has got in ahead and has taken her. We are done!" I tried to comfort him, saying, "But surely we can find another." "No, that is the only one in the port. I made inquiries when I was down here two days ago, and there is not another to be had for love or money." Then I pointed out to him two steamers lying off the port with steam up and suggested they might shortly be leaving for Constantinople. This brought a respite and we said no more, only gazing with longing eyes at the rapidly disappearing cloud of smoke out at sea. "James has got her," Donohoe kept on repeating. "Oh, why did we not start two hours earlier, then we would have been in time." I refrained from any further comment, for at such a moment all regrets were quite useless.

We soon reached Rodosto, left the car at the local han, and rushed down to the British Vice-Consulate to find Mr. Streater, the acting Consul. He took some time to find, but at length turned up. We explained our position simultaneously, until the poor man was so confused that he begged us to speak more calmly. Then he said, "What a pity you were not an hour earlier, you could have gone in the tug." "Has James taken her?" we demanded. "No," replied the Consul, "James left by the Marmora express last night, and will be in Constantinople this morning." This news did not serve to soothe our ruffled spirits. "Then who has hired her?" we asked. "Oh," Streater replied, "There are no correspondents on board, but there are a great number of refugees here who wish to leave for Constantinople, so the agent has fitted her out and is taking them down at so much a head."

We then told the Consul we must have a steamer even if we had to hire a special one. We asked him the destination of the two vessels in port, and he replied, "One is a French boat and the other a Turkish one, and both are bound for Asia Minor with refugees." We asked him if they would agree for a fixed sum to take us to Constantinople before calling at any of the Asiatic ports, but Streater only shook his head and replied, "I am afraid not." However, he said he would go off and negotiate with the agents on our behalf. It seemed an age before he returned. Whilst waiting, Donohoe and myself stood at the window of the Consulate gazing out to sea, hoping against hope that the smoke of some other steamer might suddenly appear. But, like Bluebeard's wife, we waited in vain.

Presently Streater came back, and his looks told us plainly he had failed. "I am very sorry; it is impossible. The Turkish captain dare not take you to Constantinople, as he fears a revolution on board amongst the emigrants unless he carries them direct to Asia Minor, and as most of them have rifles he won't take any risk. The agent of the French boat says he must first cable down to Constantinople, but it is extremely doubtful if the line is working, and, in any case, there is sure to be a long delay and we might not get a reply until to-morrow."

We were in despair. Every hour lost was of paramount importance to us, and, unless we could leave at nightfall, we would never reach Constantinople in time to catch the steamer to Roumania. Streater then suggested it might be possible to get a tug up from Silivri or from Evekli, where he knew there was a salvage boat. We begged him to cable at once and gave him *carte blanche* to arrange terms. He returned shortly afterwards with the news that the operator could not be found, which, translated into the language of Turkey, meant that the operator would

not send any telegram, unless he received some backsheesh. This was quickly forthcoming.

Meanwhile a slimy Levantine in a morning coat and greasy bowler hat came into the Consulate and asked whether he could assist us. His appearance was not prepossessing, but in such an emergency we could not be particular with whom we had dealings and we explained to him fully our position. He then said, "I think I can arrange for the Turkish steamer to take you, or if not the Turkish perhaps the French boat will; if you will come along with me we will see what can be done."

Again our drooping stocks rose a point and we followed our would be benefactor, the Turkish term for which is "The man who receives a commission," to the office of the Turkish boat. Here we found the agent, the captain, and a horde of other hangers-on, all of whom would share in the disbursement we might make. Our guide explained our position, which was quite unnecessary, as they knew it already, and then asked what terms they would require for the short eight hours' easy steam to Constantinople. The reply staggered even Donohoe and myself, though by this time we thought we had become accustomed to almost any shocks. The mild figure demanded was three hundred pounds Turkish. We refused to negotiate on these terms and, as they would not bring their price down, we tried threats and said we would go to the Governor. I also produced the letter from Abdullah, the Commander-in-Chief, but this was simply brushed aside. They knew too well that order no longer existed in the army and that Abdullah's days as Commander-in-Chief were already numbered. Shortly afterwards, Streater joined us and took up the case on our behalf, offering two hundred pounds as our maximum, but they stuck to their three and we left the office.

Streater then said to us, "It is no use paying three, two, or one hundred pounds to those people. They will take your money, carry you out to sea and then refuse to go to Constantinople on the grounds that they fear a row with the refugees." This thought had long been in both our minds, and we at once put aside as hopeless all hope of getting the Turkish steamer. We then tried the French boat, but the agent wanted two hundred pounds and persisted that it was necessary to await a reply to his telegram from Constantinople. It was now nearly two o'clock, and our case seemed almost hopeless. We returned to the han and had one of the most melancholy lunches I have ever known. The Consul did his best to raise our spirits by assuring us that very often some stray steamer looked in unexpectedly at Rodosto ; or by saying he was sure the tug would come up from Evekli in lots of time to reach Constantinople. He also remarked, "There is just a bare chance that the Austrian Lloyd boat may put in here to-day. She was due yesterday, but never turned up and is now twenty-four hours overdue. But you cannot rely on her as in all probability she is held up indefinitely at the Dardanelles."

He then brought the captain of a sailing boat, who guaranteed to deliver us in Constantinople in eight hours if the wind held. But what chance was there of the wind holding! It almost invariably dies down at nightfall in the Sea of Marmora. We felt the risk was too great and put that scheme also amongst the discards. We felt there was nothing to do but to wait. We repaired to the Consulate and sat upstairs scanning the horizon, examining every distant speck which might possibly be a steamer, but which invariably turned out to be clouds or small fishing craft. I have never spent a more miserable afternoon. We were dead beat, too upset to work, and roamed about the little room like criminals in their cell

awaiting the verdict of the jury or the advent of the hangman. Thus the afternoon wore on.

At four o'clock I became quite desperate, and determined to make one final effort to secure the French boat on my own account. I went to the agent and found his demeanour somewhat changed. He seemed more anxious to do business and said nothing further about first waiting for the reply from Constantinople. He made all sorts of difficulties and pointed out it would be impossible for him to land us actually in Constantinople, but that he could take us as far as San Stefano, from where we could take a local service running to Stamboul, or else we might hire a carriage and drive the remainder of the distance. I suppose his change of attitude was due to our not having accepted his original terms, and therefore he was afraid our emergency was not so great as he had imagined, and he feared lest the golden harvest should slip through his fingers altogether. When I saw he was wavering, I proceeded to beat down the terms and finally got the figure down to £150, of which sum the Steamship Company was to receive one-third, and the rest was to be divided between the agent and the captain, and one or two other interested parties whose mouths it was necessary to stop. But, when I thought all was settled, the agent suddenly declared nothing could be definitely arranged until he had been off and seen the captain, who, he said, might not be satisfied with his share, in which case I would have to pay a trifle more. I was desperate and told him to go, and to come back at once so that the money could be paid over and the ship made ready to start. He promised to be back in half-an-hour.

I returned once more to the Consulate and found Donohoe, his face hidden in his hands, a victim of the profoundest melancholy. "Donohoe," I said, "we will get there, but it will cost us not less than seventy-five

pounds apiece." His spirits rose a trifle. Then I sat down and waited for the agent to return. Streater, the Consul, had also joined us. One by one the minutes passed. Twenty-five had gone by and still the agent had not arrived. "He does not mean to take us, after all," groaned Donohoe. "You must give him time," said Streater, strolling across to the window and gazing seawards.

Another five minutes had gone by when suddenly the Consul gave a wild yell, sprang into the air, rushed towards us, and, seizing our hands, dragged us towards the window, shouting out, "Look, look, what is that!" There, still far out to sea, way down on the horizon, was a thin trail of smoke. "It's a steamer. It's a steamer," yelled Streater. "Yes, but how do you know it's coming here?" "They all come here." "Yes, but it may be a warship going direct to Constantinople." "No, I am quite sure it's the delayed Austrian Lloyd boat." We were in a state almost of frenzy. We seized our field glasses and glued them on the spot. Gradually the smoke grew denser and soon the outlines of a large steamer were plainly visible. We uttered no further word but watched her course. Suddenly Streater, who had been using my glasses, broke the silence. "Yes, it's the Austrian Lloyd. I know her by her funnels. In an hour she will be in port and will leave to-night for Constantinople, for they never stay longer than two or three hours."

But even now Donohoe and I remained in a painful state of anxiety and asked the worried Consul more foolish questions in a given space of time than I am sure he has ever been asked before. Such as, "Don't you think she will go direct to Constantinople without stopping, to make up lost time?" Answer: "She cannot. The terms of her contract with the Turkish Government oblige her to put up in here." "Look, she is not coming this way, she is keeping out to

sea." Answer: "She has to take that course to avoid the shallow water." "Do you think there will be any room on board?" "Well, there may be no cabins, but the captain can hardly refuse to take you on deck."

But at length all doubts were set at rest. She was obviously coming into port. We closed our glasses, opened a bottle of whiskey, and drank long and deeply. Then, joining hands, we danced a sort of farandole round and round the room till the crazy old building fairly shook. We forgot all about the French agent and hastened to the han to make ready our slender baggage. Now we had our revenge. The unexpected arrival of the Austrian Lloyd boat came as a bitter shock to all the gentry who had hoped to make large sums of money by catering to our misfortunes. The price of steamers fell almost to zero. The Turkish boat was ready to take us for £50 and the French boat for £25. But we laughed in their faces. Their chance had gone. They could have gained their money, had they been able to make up their greedy minds earlier in the day. The golden harvest had slipped through their hands at the last minute. There was wailing and gnashing of teeth amongst the Levantines that night in Rodosto. They learnt a lesson which they will not forget in a hurry, namely, that "he who asks too much is liable to get nothing at all."

As soon as the ship came alongside we went on board. Our surmise that there would be no cabin accommodation turned out to be only too correct. The ship was absolutely packed with Turkish refugees who had come from Greece and from every port of call. Not only were all the cabins full, but men, women, and children were sleeping on the decks and in the holds of the vessel. However, we did not care. Without even a place on which to recline my weary head, the great vessel seemed a paradise

[Photo "Daily Mirror"

CROSSING THE BRIDGE AT CHORLOU.

of luxury after all I had gone through. After I had been on board a short time I met the captain, who, hearing of all our hardships and privations, said he would allow us to sleep in the hospital, as there happened to be no sick on board. This was a dirty cabin situated right forward, and to reach it we were obliged to climb over a mass of struggling humanity, weeping women, gesticulating men, and children howling for their bottles. On any ordinary occasion I would have hesitated about sleeping in the cabin which had been used as a hospital during a fairly long voyage by countless refugees, but I was too weary to be fastidious, and after a hearty dinner and a bottle of sweet, almost undrinkable champagne, I was soon sound asleep. At nine a.m. on the following morning, Saturday, November 2nd, we reached Constantinople.

It was exactly a week since I had left Constantinople, but as I drove up through Galata and Stamboul it seemed as if months had passed, and at times I thought I had just awakened from a dream. But what a week it had been! Here is a brief diary, day by day.

Saturday, October 26th.—I left Constantinople at eight a.m. All the day in the motor-car on my way to Chorlou. Passed the night in the rain on the road.

Sunday, October 27th.—Still struggling to reach Chorlou by motor. Four p.m. abandoned car and walked for three hours. Seven p.m. reached convoy, obtained horses and rode for eight hours, reaching Chorlou between two and three a.m. Spent the remainder of the night with Abdullah.

Monday, October 28th.—Left Chorlou by train. Three p.m. reached Lule Burgas. Spent the night there.

Tuesday, October 29th.—I spent the morning looking for horses. Eleven a.m. Lule Burgas attacked by Bulgarians. 11.30. I am forced to fly from the town. All day on the battlefield. Lost at nightfall, but finally reach Abdullah's headquarters at Sakiskeuy at 9.30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 30th.—At 5 a.m. we once more leave Sakiskeuy and ride to the battlefield. All day I watch the fighting. At 6 p.m. I return to Abdullah's headquarters. At 7 p.m. my brother and Sir Bryan Leighton arrive in Sakiskeuy. Spent the night in the village.

Thursday, October 31st.—I leave Sakiskeuy at daybreak. All day retreating on Chorlou. Reach Chorlou at 10 p.m.

Friday, November 1st.—I leave Chorlou at 7 a.m. for Rodosto. Leave Rodosto at 9 p.m. for Constantinople.

Saturday, November 2nd.—Arrive in Constantinople at 9 a.m. At 3 p.m. I leave for Constanza, Roumania, by steamer.

Sunday, November 3rd.—I arrive at Constanza at 1 p.m. All Sunday cabling account of the battle to the *Daily Telegraph.*

Monday, November 4th.—All day cabling account of battle and the retreat.

Tuesday, November 5th.—The same. Sailed for Constantinople.

But here I am anticipating. Donohoe and I were to receive some further shocks before we finally reached Constanza. On our arrival in Constantinople we went to the Pera Palace Hotel and had a wash, the first one either of us had had since we had left Constantinople. The luxury of a bath compensated us for a great many hardships, and the joy of putting on clean clothes was immense, and cannot be appreciated until you have known what it is to wear the same garments for a week or ten days on end. The surprise of the manager of the hotel and his underlings was immense at seeing us so soon again, as they thought we had left Constantinople for at least a month or six weeks, and there were not a few who never expected to set eyes on us again, fully believing we would return to England *via* Sofia, after Nazim's triumphal entry into that city.

There were rumours in Constantinople of a great battle and a Turkish reverse, but not a soul had the least idea of the extent of the disaster and of the entire break-up of the Turkish Army. We guarded our secret most carefully and refused to commit ourselves or to answer the most pressing inquiries, always replying, "We do not know what has happened, as we were kept locked up and allowed to see nothing." We also kept very closely to our rooms until the hour arrived for us to board the boat for Roumania, as we were afraid our presence in the town might become known to the authorities, who might take steps to keep us in confinement so as to prevent the truth becoming known to the whole world.

We learnt that Lionel James had reached Constantinople on Friday morning and had sent off despatches through the Censor exactly as we had anticipated, but, as I have already said, this caused us but small misgiving, as a censored despatch of the battle would be of small value, and our descriptions of the full extent of the disaster would only gain in comparison. James was not in Constantinople, as he had left early that morning in a small tug for Rodosto, evidently intending to rejoin the army, and hoping to be in time to watch the closing stages of the battle. Afterwards, when I saw James at Rodosto a week later, he told me he had left the front when he did because, having heard I was with the army, he feared I might steal a march on him by slipping down by train to Constantinople with or without the permission of the Headquarters Staff. However, he need not have had any fears on that score, because nothing would have induced me to leave the army until the battle was over and I had learnt for certain what had happened. He also told me another reason he had for leaving the front when he did was the fact, that he had learnt in Rodosto, that the only steamer

for Constantinople left on Thursday and there would be no other for four days. His feelings may therefore be imagined when, as he lay horribly sea sick in a terribly rough sea, he saw the Austrian Lloyd boat go by, because his instinct told him that Donohoe and I would be on board, and therefore would be in time to catch the mail for Constanza.

It was not my original intention to go myself to Constanza, but to send my despatches across by a trusted agent and then to return to the front without delay. But this was impossible, as neither Donohoe nor myself had a single line written when we reached Constantinople, and we had no time to write a lengthy despatch before the boat left. We therefore had no alternative but to cross ourselves. At 2 o'clock we slipped quietly from the Pera Palace Hotel and went on board the boat. It was very crowded and most of the good cabins were already occupied, but we found a fairly comfortable one.

Almost the first person we met on board was Mr. Fitzmaurice, the chief dragoman of the British Embassy, who went up to Donohoe and told him the authorities were looking for us on board and had asked him to point us out to them. This Fitzmaurice declined to do, saying he had not seen us. Donohoe came and communicated this awful news to me and we both were terribly scared. Supposing that even now all our hopes were cast to the ground! Supposing we were prevented from reaching Constanza! Then all our efforts, and trials, and troubles would be wasted. We decided to go down below and sit in an obscure cabin and remain there, until the ship started.

That was an awful hour we passed. Donohoe was quite desperate, and, taking out his revolver, swore he would not be taken alive. We heard voices inquiring for "Mr. Bartlott" and "Mr. Donohague" of the stewards, but the latter could give no information. The clock seemed literally to stand still.

The boat was due to start at 3 p.m., but she was late, and in our nervous state we thought she was being purposely held up in order that a more stringent search might be made. But at last we heard the gentle switch of the screw and the welcome sound of the ladder being raised. We were under way and knew at last that we were safe.

But now for the first time our luck deserted us. The boat was due to reach Constanza at 4 a.m. on Sunday morning, but, unfortunately, we encountered the worst storm of the year in the Black Sea and the steamer could make hardly any progress against it. All night long we were tossed about in the trough of the sea. Not a single passenger was present at dinner, and the majority were very sea sick. Donohoe and I had come on board with the noble resolution of working all through the night at our despatches, but this was quite impossible, and at six o'clock we were only too glad to retire to our berths, where we remained until the good ship entered the port of Constanza at 1 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, more than ten hours late.

We rushed to the Hotel Carol, engaged rooms, and hastened up to the cable office to arrange with the manager for the prompt dispatch of our cables to London. I never felt less inclined to sit down and write, and Donohoe was in an equally bad condition. We were both worn out from the horrible baffling we had received from the waves, and my head swam. The manager of the cable office was most obliging and helped us in every way in his power. We handed over to him most of the gold we had strapped round our waists, and told him to come for more when it was exhausted. He gave us a special messenger who was to go to and from the hotel to the telegraph station in a cab, engaged by the day, as each sheet of our telegrams was ready to be sent off.

Then we returned to the hotel, had a hasty lunch and

commenced to write. We each had a typewriter and kept at work the whole of the afternoon, until our minds were so weary we could no longer think and our fingers so sore we could hardly hit the keyboard. The messenger thought we were quite mad to send off so many thousand words, as he had no knowledge of English and could not understand what it was all about. But he entered fully into the spirit of the occasion, and, whenever one of us managed to get a page ahead of the other, he would point this fact out, and beg each of us in turn to make an additional spurt. By eight o'clock I had only finished about one half of my cable, and the manager told us it would be no use writing any more that night as it could not be sent through to London in time. We were glad to desist and to sit down to a good dinner.

All through the following day, Tuesday, we were hard at it again, and I was even obliged to write for another two hours on Wednesday morning. Then for the first time we could breathe freely once more. We knew we had beaten everybody else and that no other accounts of the battle, uncensored, could appear in the London Press until Thursday morning.

On Tuesday evening, at eleven o'clock, we once more boarded the boat for Constantinople, and after an extremely calm voyage reached the city at two o'clock on Thursday afternoon, wondering what had happened during our absence, and more especially interested to learn what sort of a reception we would receive from the authorities, after the full exposure we had made of the Turkish disasters.

Now that I had finished my work for the time being and had a few minutes for calm reflection, I became painfully anxious to know what had happened to all the other correspondents and more especially to learn the fate

of my brother. I now realised for the first time that he might be in a serious position, left as he was at Chorlou with all our baggage and stores and with all my precious horses on his hands. I felt certain the Turkish Army would never rally at Chorlou and feared lest the town had already fallen into the hands of the Bulgarians, and thought it more than likely that by this time the unfortunate Seabury was well on his way to Sofia as a prisoner of war.

I had one ray of hope. Just as I was leaving Chorlou on the Friday morning, MacCulloch, the special correspondent of the *Daily News*, who was afterwards captured, handed me a letter from Bryant, the Englishman I had engaged to join me at Chorlou to carry despatches. In this he said he had reached Chorlou and was hiding in a house in the town, so as not to attract the attention of the authorities. I had no time to find him or even to write him a note, but I hoped he would learn of my brother's presence and would join him. I had great faith in Bryant's knowledge of the Turkish language, the character of the race, and more especially of the country, and I hoped he would bring my brother safely through all difficulties to Constantinople.

As soon as I reached the Pera Palace Hotel I inquired if he had arrived, but, to my dismay, they told me no English correspondents had as yet reached Constantinople, and there was absolutely no news of my brother or of any of them. This filled me with anxiety. I went upstairs to my room and sat down to think over the whole position, to decide what steps I would take to go in search of my brother, Sir Bryan Leighton, my stores, my camp equipment, and my horses.

I had hardly sat there for half an hour, when the door of my room opened and in walked my brother, very dirty,

very weary, and with a ten days' growth of beard on his face. In a few words he gave me a brief summary of his own adventures after I had left Chorlou, and I will now leave him to tell his own tale of his personal experiences and of what he saw of the retreat of the routed Army of Thrace from Chorlou to the lines of Chataldja.

CHAPTER XV

THE RETREAT FROM CHORLOU TO CHATALDJA

My brother left Chorlou for Rodosto at seven o'clock on the morning of Friday, November 1st. I did not expect to see him again during the war, as I knew that it was his intention to go to Constanza in Roumania in order to send off his despatches describing the battle of Lule Burgas, and I did not think the Turkish authorities—supine as I knew them to be—would ever allow him to return to Constantinople, much less to the front. Indeed I feared that when his unceremonious departure became known, I should be arrested and summarily executed or expelled, or, worse still, incarcerated in some vermin-haunted ergastula.

It was impossible to ride out on Friday in order to see what had become of the defeated army, as the horses had done one hundred and fifty miles in three days over rough country, and were badly in need of rest.

About lunch time I sauntered out to see some of the other correspondents, and to learn of their adventures. As I was passing down the principal street, an unknown man in the dress of a Greek peasant accosted me and then thrust a crumpled piece of paper into my hand. I was greatly astonished and turned round to ask the man what he wanted, but he was already disappearing up a side street. I examined the piece of paper and on it was written: "I am at the

house of the Greek priest, in the street of the tanners.—BRYANT."

I was quite at a loss as to what this could mean, and was about to throw away the paper, thinking that the man had made a mistake, when I suddenly remembered that after the battle of Lule Burgas, my brother had asked me if I had seen or heard anything of one Bryant, an Englishman in the roads department, whom he had engaged as a dragoman and despatch rider a few minutes before leaving Constantinople. Bryant had undertaken to break through the Turkish lines and to get to Chorlou by the previous Monday, but since then we had heard nothing of him, and my brother thought that he had probably abandoned the attempt as hopeless, or else that he had been caught and shot as a spy.

With some difficulty I found the house of the Greek priest in the street of the tanners. Bryant was hiding in a back room, and was in a sad state of dilapidation, his clothes being torn and covered with mud, and the soles of his very inadequate boots worn completely through. He told me that he had been five days getting through Constantinople and that after passing the lines of Chataldja on foot, he had made his way to the sea coast and had come thence in a row boat to Silivri. From the latter place he had walked to Chorlou, and had been hiding for twenty-four hours in the house of the priest, who was an old friend of his, not daring to go out for fear of being arrested as a spy.

I was very glad of his arrival, as I was badly in need of an interpreter whom I could trust and who knew the country, so I took him back to where I was lodging, and provided him with some clothes and a badge certifying that he was our dragoman.

Signs of the rout were becoming more and more apparent in the peaceful little town of Chorlou. One by one the shutters were being put up in the front of the shops, and the

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

THE CAMP OF THE ROUTED ARMY AT CHERKESKEUY.

Ottoman subjects were beginning to pack their worldly belongings in bullock-wagons and to trail out of the town toward the sea coast. The streets also were becoming more and more crowded with hungry and dispirited looking soldiers, wandering around in search of something to eat. Fearing that at any moment the patience of these unhappy men might become exhausted, and the town given over to pillage and loot, I decided to leave my comfortable quarters, and to move to a room in the inn—or han as they are locally called,—above the stables in which our horses were kept. In doing this I was chiefly actuated by the thought that, in the event of trouble, the horses would at once be looted, and I was anxious to be able to protect them.

As I was packing up our things, Goupa, my brother's Greek dragoman, came to me, and, after taking up an attitude much resembling that of the Chevalier Grasso in *Othello* when he discovers the supposed treachery of Desdemona, began pouring forth a flood of eloquence in bad French, accompanied by an extraordinary exuberance of tragic gesture. It was some minutes before I could make out what he was talking about, then I grasped that he was imploring me not to stay in such a danger spot as Chorlou, but to take the train back to Constantinople at once.

I told him that such a thing was utterly impossible, whereupon he went on with greater vehemence. "Here we are exposed to the rapacity of the Turks, and to the vengeance of the wild Bulgarians. This is alright for you. You are an Englishman, and do not mind to die—all your race is so. They are a nation of madmen. It is alright for me also, for I am a man and know not fear." His attitude became more and more heroic. "It does not matter for my wife; when I am gone she can take another husband." Here he actually shed a tear. "But it is of my daughters that I think. If I perish and can no longer protect them,

they will go on the streets; I know it as sure as my name is Goupa, they will take to the streets."

There was so much pathos, nobility of gesture, and paternal affection in his voice that I was quite moved. As there was a train leaving that evening, I told Goupa to take all the heavy baggage and to go with it to Chataldja, or Constantinople, at which he was highly delighted and left in due course. Bryant, who knows the country, afterwards spoilt the effect of Goupa's heroics by telling me that the man had been in the last extremity of fear for some time and was thinking solely of his own safety.

I had the remainder of the things carried round to the han, where Bryant and I were accommodated in a dirty, little, tumble-down room, with whitewashed walls, and a broken window. It contained two large beds, which occupied practically all the floor space. The room was on the first floor, directly above the stables which occupied the whole of the ground floor, and in which were housed some thirty horses. Outside the room was a large square atrium, where some twenty soldiers and peasants were sitting round in a circle eating their meal out of an iron pot. The stench from the stables was indescribable, and I think a few nights in that han would have meant typhoid fever.

Ismet Bey came in to dine with us, and the dinner, which consisted of dry biscuits, potted meat, sardines, and cocoa, was spread upon my bed, upon which we also sat cross-legged while we ate.

Ismet is a young Turk and a good example of the new school, and is at once one of the most delightful and cultured of the Turks that I met during my sojourn in the country. His family have discarded the old Turkish fashion of locking up their womenfolk in a harem, and of never allowing them to be seen with uncovered faces

by a man, and he himself is married to a charming Frenchwoman.

He appeared to feel the disaster which had fallen on his country at Lule Burgas very much. When I remarked that the general disorganisation had surprised me, as I had understood that the Young Turks had entirely reformed the army since their advent to power in 1908, he said: "How could we? We did our best, but we were never given a chance. First there was the rising of the Arabs in the Yemen, then the Albanians revolted, after that it was the Kurds of the Caucasus, and then came Italy's attack on Tripoli." He was silent for a few moments, overcome by the memory of so many disasters. Then he went on: "Besides how can we hope to govern the Turkish Empire by constitutional means? There are no less than thirty-two different races and one hundred different creeds. Most of the people, too, are quite ignorant, their only education being a knowledge of a few religious shibboleths."

"Yes," I answered. "You did, indeed, undertake a hopeless task. Only a dictator could hope to govern such a discordant conglomeration. Your task was further complicated by half the sects being Christians."

"Yes," Ismet answered, "and what Christians some of them are! At Jerusalem at least twenty different sects wage incessant warfare round the birthplace of your beautiful gospel of peace."

"Yes," I replied, "I have always understood that it was hard for a man to visit Jerusalem and to remain a Christian."

"My cousin," Ismet continued, "was for a long time Governor of the Holy City before he went to Smyrna, and his life was rendered intolerable by the quarrels of the Christians. One night when I was staying with him," Ismet went on, "a soldier came to the palace at two in the morn-

ing and awakened him, begging that he would come at once to the sacred shrine of Bethlehem, where a terrible fight was going on between orthodox Greeks and Roman Catholics. It appears that the Roman Catholics are allowed to pass before the shrine from nine o'clock till midnight, and the Greeks from midnight until three a.m. Each suppliant is supposed to make three genuflexions before the sacred relics and then to pass on out of the shrine. On the night in question three Catholics were still in the shrine, when the Greeks entered. The first made his three genuflexions and passed on. The second became excited, and in his confusion made four, whereupon the Greeks seized the third suppliant and insisted that he should only make two genuflexions, in compensation for his comrade's excesses. Other Roman Catholics ran back to join in the altercation, and finally a free fight ensued, which became so violent that the Turkish soldiers were obliged to lock the shrine and run to fetch the Governor. My cousin found these good Christians pulling each other's beards out and scratching each other's faces with fearful energy," Ismet continued, "and it was only with great difficulty and after sending for the French Consul, that he could restore order. If he had used force and some of them had been hurt, there would have been an outcry in your papers that the Turks were interfering with Christians in the celebrations of their religion."

I was very much amused by Ismet's story, and begged him to tell me more tales of Jerusalem, so after a little while he began.

"At a certain time of the year—I think it is during your Bairam (Easter)—Greek pilgrims gather in the temple to light their lamps at the sacred fire which is supposed to burn forth on a certain day by divine inspiration. Sometimes the pilgrims wait in the temple for days, never leaving it for one instant, and praying continually for the sacred fire to

burn. Meanwhile the priests go round telling them that the difficulties of combustion are caused by their parsimony in giving alms, and exciting them to a high degree of fanaticism. The people grow hysterical from much fasting and praying, and free fights often ensue. The temple also becomes so dirty, and the stench so foul, that there is serious danger of disease breaking out.

"On one occasion, a few years ago now, things got so bad and the priests kept the people waiting so long, that my cousin sent for the Greek patriarch and said to him:—'If your God, whoever he may be, does not light the sacred fire to-night, I shall send my soldiers to clear out your temple.'"

"Well, and what was the result?" I queried: "That night," Ismet concluded with a smile, "A thousand happy pilgrims lit their lamps at the sacred flame amid scenes of unparalleled rejoicing."

Then the conversation turned on the question of chance. I told the story of M —— Bey, the Governor of Pera, who at the battle of Lule Burgas had lost 300 men of his regiment killed, and practically all the rest wounded, while he himself had sat on a white charger all through the battle and had escaped unhurt. "His escape was little less than miraculous," I concluded.

"How miraculous?" Ismet replied. "It is written in the Book of Fate that he should escape." Then he went on to tell me of a Mollah, who had been shaken out of the bracelet of a minaret, while proclaiming the Muezzin during the recent earthquake, and who, falling into the basket of a melon seller, had escaped unhurt. "It is Kismet," Ismet concluded. "The destiny of every man is written in the Book of Fate."

Then I knew that Ismet, too, despite his western education and general enlightenment, was a believer in Kismet, that

blind faith in predestination, which has strangled the energies and vitality of his race.

Later on in the evening Major Vasfi Bey, who was in charge of the correspondents, sent round to say that, as the left wing of the Turkish Army had suffered a reverse, it was impossible for us to remain any longer in Chorlou, and that accordingly we must leave with him at eight o'clock on the following morning to proceed to Cherkeskeuy, and thence to Sarai. He gave me to understand that the object of the move was to transfer us from the beaten left wing of the army, to the right, which, he said, had held its own. I was very sceptical, as Cherkeskeuy was on the road to Constantinople, and I had little faith in his statement that we should advance from thence to Sarai. I had also been told by a Turkish staff officer, that the major portion of the beaten army had called about ten miles north of Chorlou, and was entrenched there with a view to offering a desperate resistance to the Bulgarian advance.

So, as I was anxious not to miss the battle, I decided not to leave Chorlou with Major Vasfi and the other correspondents.

The next morning it was raining hard when, at ten o'clock, Major Vasfi, and all the correspondents he could collect, started on this melancholy ride to the rear; nearly all those who went with him were either Frenchmen or Germans; the English, being of a more adventurous disposition, had either remained behind or vanished with their despatches after the battle of Lule Burgas. Most of them ultimately rode to Rodosto on the Sea of Marmora about 15 miles from Chorlou, and went thence by sea to Constantinople, so that, with the exception of one German, I think that I was the only correspondent to accompany the routed army on its terrible retreat to Chataldja.

The aspect of the erstwhile prosperous little town of Chorlou had completely changed. All the shops were now closed and barred, and the streets deserted by the inhabitants. Scores of hungry wolfish soldiers were wandering round the desolate town in search of a scrap of bread to eat, but everywhere they found the doors shut and bolted in their faces. Several soldiers came to the door of our inn, which had been left temporarily open. Inside were a number of Greeks and a few Turkish officers smoking in front of a warm fire, and drinking coffee or rakki. The men stood for a few minutes at the door, looking with envious eyes at the warm room and at the food and drink. Then the Greek proprietor came forward and asked if they had money, and when they shook their heads, he slammed the door in their faces and bolted it. I expected to see them storm and pillage the inn, but instead they just slouched off in the rain, shivering as they went. Poor wretches, all the spirit had been starved out of them, and I shall never forget the look of patient suffering in their faces.

All Saturday, more and more hungry soldiers came pouring into Chorlou, and more and more of the inhabitants put up their shutters and fled towards the coast. The two old Greek ladies, in whose house I had lodged before taking up my abode over the stables, came to me in tears to ask if they were safe. I comforted them as best I could, but it was with the conviction that they were doomed.

All day long the rain came down in torrents, and all day long I sat at the window of my attic watching the wrecks of the grand army dribble through the town. From time to time there was a loud rumbling, and the clatter of horses' hoofs on the rough cobble stones, as a gun went by drawn by six tired and starving horses.

The next morning, Sunday, November 3rd, the rain had

ceased, and at dawn I rode out in the direction of Lule Burgas to see the last stand, which I believed to be imminent, accompanied by Bryant and a young Englishman who was serving as a volunteer with the Turkish Army. The road was strangely deserted and quiet; only a few stragglers in the last stages of exhaustion, a number of dead horses and broken down transport wagons were to be seen.

The twenty-four hours' continual rain had rendered the rough cart tracks a sea of mud, while raging streams were tearing along the bottom of what had been dry nullahs when we had returned from Lule Burgas three days previously, and several times we were in water up to our saddle girths, when crossing the so-called fords. We rode for about ten miles over the barren table-land, until from a high plateau we got a view of the country for fifteen miles around. There was no sign of any army, nor the sound of a single shot; only in the distance the smoke of many burning villages.

In that moment we realised that the Turkish Army had retreated, leaving Chorlou and the railway wholly unprotected. We turned and rode for Chorlou, for it was evident that the Bulgarians might at any time come down the line and cut off our retreat, and I was anxious to save both myself and the baggage.

Chorlou in a few short hours had become like a village of the dead. Hadji, the old Albanian groom, who always seemed to know by instinct what was going to happen, and who incidentally regarded us as quite mad for wanting to come near the war—had already harnessed the two country-bred ponies into the Araba, and was awaiting our return with the peculiar impassiveness of his race.

After half an hour's halt to feed ourselves and the horses, we got under way, and by noon were leaving Chorlou by

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

TURKISH ARTILLERY LEAVING THE FIELD OF LULE BURGAS.

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the road which leads to Cherkeskeuy, thirty miles to the south-east.

We travelled fast and soon began to overtake the remnants of the army tramping to the rear, and all the way to Cherkeskeuy, a march of thirty miles, this long line of stragglers continued. The men were trudging along sullenly, and without a vestige of order. Many had thrown away their rifles and ammunition, others were wounded and soaked in blood, having dragged themselves forty miles from the dreadful battlefield of Lule Burgas. Only a few of the latter could hope to escape, for in their weak and starving condition, another night in the open would mean death.

I saw one man fall by the roadside. He at once took off his boots, which were in good condition, and, calling to a comrade who was staggering along in bare feet, handed them to him and then lay down to die. I held out a piece of dry bread to another soldier, and he snatched it eagerly, crying, "May Allah bless you! I have eaten nothing for five days." Several times my horse shied, and, looking down, I saw staring up at me with wide open eyes the face of some dead man lying half buried in the mud and trampled on by all who passed.

Before we had gone very far it came on to rain. The soldiers around us presented a most melancholy spectacle. Most of them had lost all their kit. Their mud-bespattered grey overcoats were in rags, and they wore the hoods turned up over their heads, while their feet were wrapped in sandals which they had cut from the hide of some dead ox. Their faces were covered with thick black beards, and were so drawn with hunger, privation, and horror that they looked like an army of ghosts, as they trudged along with bent heads and shuffling footsteps.

The track lay over barren hills, and the rain came driving down before the bitter north-east wind, enveloping the

remnants of the Grand Army of Thrace in grey mist clouds. Many men fell by the roadside to die from exhaustion, exposure, or the loss of blood from wounds incurred three days before. Others more fortunate were riding lean pack horses or donkeys; all were starving.

Sickened by all we saw, we pushed on to Cherkeskeuy, full of the hope that there the fearful ebb-tide from the battlefield would cease, and that we should find an army ordered and prepared for battle. But as we marched, the line of stragglers thickened, and the confusion increased, until, just as it was growing dark, we came to Cherkeskeuy, to find pandemonium, but no army.

Every approach to the station was blocked by artillery, ammunition wagons, transport carts, and crowds of excited soldiers and refugees fighting their way towards the trains. In a sleeping car which had once done service with the Orient express, I found Nazim Pasha and the whole of the Headquarters Staff. Behind it were two sumptuous motor-cars on open trucks. In another wagon-lit were all the military attachés.

The four other trains which were waiting their turn to steam off down the single line of railway to Constantinople, were packed as I have never seen trains packed before. Women and children were piled into cattle trucks one above another, together with their household goods, in such a manner that numbers must have perished from suffocation. Other women with young children strapped to their backs were running about like frightened sheep, looking in vain for places in the already overcrowded trains. I saw one old bearded man carrying his pretty young wife upon his shoulders. Wounded men were being thrown pell-mell into second-class carriages, to fall hopelessly on the floor or seats.

I met Major Vasfi, in charge of the correspondents.

He was in a great state of excitement, and told me that he was going off to Constantinople with all the correspondents he had been able to collect—mostly Frenchmen and Germans. At that moment, a young Frenchman came up, and as usual started abusing the unfortunate officer because he had lost some of his baggage. "But, Monsieur," the ever courteous Major Vasfi replied, "Why do you blame me? In war it is every man for himself, and besides, I cannot personally look after each correspondent's luggage." Then the Frenchman complained because the officer had brought them to Cherkeskeuy, and they had nothing to eat. "Monsieur, you forget that the whole army is starving, and how can I feed when I have nothing to eat myself?"

Major Vasfi then offered me a place in the train with the other correspondents, but I refused, saying that I could not abandon my two companions, and my brother's horses and baggage; so he bade me farewell with an air of depressing finality, murmuring something about the danger from disorganised soldiery.

Then I chanced on Goupa, the dragoman whom I had sent on from Chorlou on Friday evening with the heavy baggage and who had been delayed at Cherkeskeuy ever since. He was in a state of great excitement and terror, and began crying: "Monsieur, I love you as my son, but if you do not come in this train, you are a man lost." I told him not to be a fool, and he then started to tell me how to say in Bulgarian: "Please do not shoot me, I am a harmless British War Correspondent."

Night had by now set in, and in the existing state of confusion it was hopeless to attempt to move with the cart to the village of Cherkeskeuy, so we had perforce to camp in the low-lying, fever-haunted ground round the station. We paddled about in the dark, sinking from time to time well above our ankles in filthy mud and water, until we

found a dry spot—dry only by comparison, for in reality it was little better than a marsh.

When we started to pitch the tent, we found that one of the tent poles had disappeared, and it took us over an hour improvising an impromptu pole with the shaft of the cart. Then, just as we had squatted down to an excellent dinner of tinned meats, for I had saved most of our stores, there was a crash, the sound of ripping canvas, and the head of a derelict artillery horse appeared through the side of the tent, bringing the whole thing down about our ears with a run. I appropriated the animal by way of compensation for the damaged tent, but in the morning he was reclaimed by some angry gunners.

We took it in turns to keep watch over the horses all night, and the first watch fell to my lot. Hadji had purloined some coal from the station, and lighted a fire, but even so the cold was intense. The hill beyond the station was ablaze with a thousand camp fires, and the night filled with an indescribable medley of sound—the shouting and screaming of men and women struggling for places in the trains, the incessant whistling of engines crawling slowly through the crowds on the lines, the wailing of children exposed to the bitter cold, and the ceaseless coughing of soldiers lying without covering or shelter in the fœtid marsh around us. From time to time hungry, wolfish-looking soldiers came prowling round our tent in search of loot, only to disappear at the sight of my revolver like shadows in the night.

Towards midnight there came a great wailing from the hill behind us, and turning I saw the village of Cherkeskeuy going up in flames. For a few moments the white mosque was surrounded with a halo of light, and then was swallowed up in black clouds of smoke. There would be no stand at Cherkeskeuy, and at dawn we struck our tent, and trekked off in the direction of Chataldja.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MIGRATION OF A PEOPLE

It was the same weary spiritless tramp to the rear, save that now most of the sick and wounded had dropped out and perished. There was not a vestige of order. Some of the men were riding on donkeys, others on broken-down horses. The majority having thrown away their boots, to which they were not accustomed in everyday life, were trudging along in blood-stained socks or bare feet.

There was no complaining; only a vast silence as of the grave, until I felt that I was marching in the midst of an army of corpses without souls. A field gun was being drawn by two horses and two white oxen. Mingled with the rabble of soldiery, were thousands of bullock-wagons, in which the mussulmans, inhabitants of the country, were driving off all their worldly goods towards Stamboul.

It was the migration of a whole people, the return of the Turks to Asia. Barefooted women, in bright-coloured, baggy, cotton trousers, with gaudy yashmaks, were driving their flocks along the road, and little children were goading on the oxen. Many of them had unfastened their veils, and I was able to see how beautiful they were.

One magnificent Georgian woman, with skin of alabaster, proud aquiline features, and hair of burnt gold, was sitting in the front of an ox-wagon, a yellow quilt wrapped around her

shoulders, while she held a tiny child to her heart. By the side of the wagon walked a handsome, old, bearded man, with a turban of green and rose. They were the living image of a picture of the flight into Egypt, by an Italian master, which I had seen some years ago—I think in the picture gallery at Dresden.

Soon after leaving Cherkeskeuy, the road passed into mountainous country covered with thick oak scrub. It is called a road only by courtesy and became completely blocked, so that the bullock-wagons could not progress more than a mile an hour. Therefore, had the Bulgarians possessed adequate cavalry, in a position to push on after the battle of Lule Burgas, they might have captured the whole of this great convoy of women and children, together with the greater part of fugitives from the once Grand Army of Thrace.

About ten miles out we came to a spot where the mud track dived precipitously into a nullah about two hundred yards below, and then mounted almost at right angles on the other side. Down the centre of the nullah a torrent was raging, the result of Saturday's rain. Three field guns, each drawn by six emaciated horses, were about to essay the passage of this *impasse*. The first gun plunged down the slope into the stream, well above the axles. The horses plunged and struggled half-way up the far bank, then one of the wheelers fell, and the gun and horses slid back in a hopeless jumble into the torrent, the gun overturning and the horses kicking and plunging in wild confusion.

The major in charge came up to me and begged for a little brandy, and I handed him my water-bottle full of whiskey. He told me that he had commanded the eighteenth regiment of artillery. For two days they had fought at Lule Burgas against the most fearful shrapnel fire that he had

ever seen. He showed me the shields of his guns, which were battered almost out of shape.

After the army broke up on the fearful night of the 31st, he had been left behind with the rear-guard to cover its retreat, and in the night the Bulgarian cavalry had surrounded them. "They captured eighteen of my guns," he said; "I myself only just escaped with these three, and now I must abandon them, for they can never pass these roads." He seemed broken-hearted. I asked him to ride on with us, but he refused, saying, "No, I will stay with my guns. You had better push on as fast as you can. For us it is the end. But what would you? We have no roads, no food, no organisation."

A little further on I was surprised to hear myself addressed in excellent French by an emaciated and ragged private soldier. I stopped and looked hard at him. It was Macksoud Bey, a young Armenian and an attaché at the Foreign Office, who had volunteered for service with the army. Although one of the richest young men in Constantinople, he was starving on the roads less than 100 miles from the capital. He told us that he had been marching for sixty-five hours without a scrap of food to eat.

Poor Macksoud! I think the longest walk he had ever taken in his life, before the war, was from the Sublime Porte to Tokatlians, where he was in the habit of dining, and to go there he generally took a cab. He was pretty nearly at the end of his powers of endurance, but we gave him something to eat and a lift in the cart. Later we were unfortunate enough to lose sight of him in the general confusion. I afterwards learnt that he had developed dysentery, and would have died on the road, had not someone put him in a cart and brought him to Constantinople, where he recovered.

Soon afterwards we came in sight of the railway. As far as the eye could see, the track was covered with soldiers

taking the quickest route to the rear. A train was approaching from the direction of Cherkeskeuy—one of the last to leave that place. It was drawn by two powerful engines which steamed at a snail's pace along the line, whistling continually to clear a way through the rabble on the permanent way. Women, children, and soldiers were clinging to the front of the engines, the couplings of the carriages, the footboards—everywhere where they could get a hold. The roofs of the carriages were crowded, and the train was literally festooned with humanity. As it passed at the rate of four or five miles an hour, a number of soldiers tried to board it, but those in the train drew their bayonets to prevent them.

Towards evening we sighted Sinekli, after a day's march of only ten miles, so blocked were the roads. Just outside the station I was accosted by a fantastic-looking individual riding on a donkey. He was a very fat man in the uniform of a colonel, and although the weather was fine and sunny, he rode beneath the shelter of an umbrella. He told me that he was a colonel in the Army Medical Corps, and begged me to take his photograph, which I did. He had no surgical instruments; only an umbrella. For three weeks he had been wandering about the country completely lost, in search of the army. Now, through no fault of his own, he had found the army, it having come to him, so he had determined to return to Stamboul and there to await further orders.

I asked him if it had not occurred to him to go on, and to look after the sick and wounded, to which he replied: "What good can I do? I have no instruments, no bandages, no medicines. I have not even got a thermometer, only an umbrella." I gave him some whiskey, and he introduced me to a friend of his, a colonel in the Army Service Corps, who wanted us to spend the night with them

in a shed at the railway station. They also gave our horses shelter in another shed, and gave them a feed of barley, for which we were very grateful, horses' fodder being extremely scarce.

I wanted the officers to dine with us, and we made an excellent meal of a pilaf of chicken and rice; the chicken we had looted on the way down, and the Army Service Corps colonel gave them to one of his soldiers to cook, which he did in a most accomplished manner. We also had some sardines, a tin of jam, and a tin of apricots, the latter articles being very much appreciated by the Turks, who are fond of all sweet things.

They had spread a mat of honour for me, on which I had to sit cross-legged and dispense hospitality. The climax was reached when I produced a bottle of champagne. These two old men then shook me by the hand and swore eternal friendship. The colonel waxed loquacious under the influence of the champagne and many libations of whiskey. He told me that he had been one of Abdul Hamid's physicians. He also remembered my father—and ended up by growing quite maudlin at the memory of the good old days, when, under Abdul Hamid's corrupt *régime*, he was able to line his nest with golden feathers at the expense of the general public.

In the night I was awakened by the noise of someone moving in the room, and, sitting up, I saw the fat colonel opening my packing case of provisions, and taking out a bottle of whiskey, the major portion of which he proceeded to drink.

Unable to sleep again, I wandered out into the night. Sinekli lies very high and the whole line of our retreat was marked by flame and smoke, for the soldiers were burning the villages behind them. Soldiers were squatting round fires, which they fed from the stacks of coal in the station.

Further on, I came upon a large encampment of refugees. The children were crying faintly, for it was bitterly cold, and their sufferings must have been terrible, as they were only clad in thin cotton clothes. A number of women with babies in their arms were sitting round a feeble fire which they had lighted with brushwood and straw; their heads had sunk forward on their breasts and they slept. Others lay huddled up in each other's arms in the wagons, or nestled close to the sleeping oxen in search of a little warmth.

At dawn we left for Chataldja. The road was so blocked by the bullock-wagons of the refugees that I decided to ride on, leaving the cart to follow. I asked Hadji, the Albanian groom, whether he thought that he could bring it through safely, whereupon he undid his waistcoat, displaying a row of knives and an antiquated revolver, and swore by the beard of the Prophet to do so or perish in the attempt.

We now took to the railway line, but even here progress was slow, so dense was the crowd of fugitive soldiers on the line.

About 15 miles beyond Sinekli the fugitives suddenly began to run. I trotted along wondering if the Bulgarians were upon us, Then I heard a murmur of "Eckmeck! Eckmeck!" (Bread! Bread!), and round a bend in the line we came upon two abandoned truck-loads of bread, for which an excited crowd of soldiers were fighting with their bayonets.

As we neared Chataldja our spirits rose, as we heard on all sides that it was an impregnable position. We left the railway and took to the old Roman road, which wound down a green valley, between great purple hills. These Roman roads are the only real roads that the country boasts, but as the Turks have never even bothered to keep them in repair, the great square paving stones, of which they are built, have

sunk in places, leaving gaping holes, and rendering progress along them both slow and dangerous.

Three miles from Chataldja we found a village in flames and soldiers looting it for food, and our spirits began to sink. Then we came to Chataldja itself, nestling on the slope of a great bar of hills which block half the valley down which we had been riding. Chataldja was deserted, but this was not surprising, as the town itself is about seven miles in advance of the so-called lines of Chataldja.

Nowhere could we see any signs of an army, nor signs of a camp, nor signs of a fortified position. We met a lieutenant-general riding aimlessly about the country followed by an escort of four orderlies with lances, and preceded by two aides-de-camp. He told us that he had an army of 150,000 men and that 200,000 more were coming from Constantinople. Then he rode off, apparently in search of something. Poor fellow, he was looking for a phantom army which existed only in his imagination.

At Chataldja railway station we found the usual scene of pandemonium and trains, crowded with refugees and wounded, with women and children on the roofs of the carriages. We halted for an hour to feed the horses on some chopped straw and barley, which we found in the station. Some cavalry officers invited me into their carriage and gave me coffee and sweet native brandy to drink. Like all Turks, they were courtesy itself. They told me that the sufferings of the women and children on the tops of the railway carriages had been terrible, many of the children having died of exposure and hunger in the night.

While we were talking a private soldier, wearing a captain's overcoat, tried to enter the carriage. A major told him to get out and to hand over the coat, which he had doubtless pillaged from some dead officer's body. The

man refused, whereupon the major seized the coat, but the man struck him and the officer was obliged to draw his sword in self-defence.

The officers seemed broken-hearted. They said that discipline had ceased to exist, and repeated the old cry which we had heard all down the line—No roads, no food, no organisation. They advised me to ride on to Hademkeuy and to ask the commanding officer there for an escort, as the roads were unsafe.

A few miles beyond Chataldja night overtook us and we became completely lost. A bitter east wind was blowing, and it began to rain in torrents. We were chilled to the bone, and had almost abandoned all hope of finding shelter for the night, when towards midnight we sighted a blaze of light in the distance. It was Hademkeuy, and the soldiers had set fire to some of the outlying buildings to keep themselves warm.

We tapped at the door of a shepherd's wooden hut, through the chinks in the walls of which we could see a light burning. We were hospitably received by some Turkish officers, who invited us in, set us down before a brazier of red-hot coals to dry our clothes, and made us hot tea. There were about thirty officers and men in the hut, lying on the mud floor wrapped in their overcoats, or squatting about smoking cigarettes and narghilis. They were in complete ignorance of the military situation, but, as the conversation warmed, I told them, little by little, of the disaster of Lule Burgas, and of how the routed army was coming back on them in a state of complete disorder.

I had expected the awakening of strong emotion, some bitter manifestation of grief. But instead they received the news quite calmly; one or two of them exclaimed, "Allah, Allah!" and then sank once more into their habitual apathy, and a private soldier, who was squatting on the floor

REFUGEES. [*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

smoking a narghili and talking to his colonel, ceased for a moment and exclaimed, "Kismet!" Upon which they all—the colonel included—looked at the soldier as though he had said something very profound and, nodding their heads, repeated his exclamation of "Kismet!" After that they seemed to forget all about the war, and became absorbed in the study of us, our manners, equipment, and life in general.

Hademkeuy is in the centre of the so-called lines of Chataldja, which should more properly be called the lines of Chekmedche; a natural position on the slope of the hills stretching from the head of Lake Chekmedche on the west to the head of lake Derkos on the east in the shape of a semicircle, the concave edge presented to the enemy. The slopes of the hills are clothed with several lines of forts and trenches, which, if properly defended, should offer an impregnable front.

On the morning of Wednesday, November 6th, there were few signs of preparation for defence. There were only some four thousand troops in Hademkeuy, of which the majority were wandering about the village in a semi-starved condition, although only twenty miles from the capital. The remnants of the Army of Thrace were coming back toward the position and would begin to arrive on the morrow, but it seemed doubtful whether this rabble could ever be reorganised in time to offer an effective resistance to the enemy.

In the end, to the great surprise of everybody, the slowness of the Bulgarian advance was destined to give the Turks time to bring up a fresh army, composed almost entirely of Nizam troops, from Asia Minor—but of this in due season.

Later we rode on by crazy goat paths to Constantinople, over rugged mountains and beautiful green valleys, down which veiled women and little children were driving their flocks of silken-fleeced sheep.

We halted for a short while in a pretty little mountain village called St. George. Here there was food in plenty, for the army had not as yet passed through the district, and we were able to give the horses a much-needed feed—they had had nothing since the previous day at noon. We ourselves were not much better off, having had nothing but a few sodden biscuits to eat during the last twenty-four hours, owing to our unwise generosity in sharing what small stock of provisions we carried in our saddle-bags with hungry Turkish officers and men, and to the non-arrival of Hadji with the cart of provisions.

The innkeeper gave us rye bread and a bowl of steaming goat's milk, and I have seldom eaten a meal that tasted better. While we ate, the inhabitants of the village, who were nearly all Ottoman Greeks, and who appeared to have nothing on earth to do, gathered in the room of the inn and watched us eat with great interest. The long-haired, chimney-pot-hatted Greek priest also came to bid us welcome to the village, while a picturesque Albanian with a white cap and an embroidered waistcoat, who was hung all around with antiquated knives, pistols and cartridge bandoliers, looked with longing eyes at our modern revolvers, and at the gold coin which I produced to pay for the meal. Then on to Stamboul.

At sunset we reached the hills of the dead on the outskirts of the city. Around us stretched hill after hill, covered with the tombstones of the long-forgotten dead. There were some stately sarcophagi, now crumbling to ruin, but for the most part the tombstones consisted of flat slabs of marble or stone. The majority of them were prostrate, piled up in a jumble of putrefaction and decay—thousands were leaning over as if about to fall, a few were upright. In the half light of the evening they looked like myriads of white shrouded ghosts, streaming forth from their tombs to

share in some ghastly midnight orgy. Purple shadows were creeping over the hills, but in the east the sky was a sea of blood and fire, while ahead we could see the pale silver outline of the Golden Horn and the minarets of Stamboul.

As it grew darker we could no longer see the path, and our horses stumbled over the broken and prostrate tombstones, from time to time snorting and trembling as if oppressed with some strange fear; nor am I surprised, for even to my human senses it seemed as if myriads of ghosts were stretching forth their cold fingers to drag me down to the realms of putrefaction. Then we saw figures moving ahead of us, and as we got closer, found that this ghost world was peopled with hundreds of women and children who were crying faintly as if weary, hopeless, and hungry. They were refugees, who, debarred entrance into the city, had taken refuge among the tombs, where soon hunger, exposure, and disease would drive many of them to find a lasting resting-place.

We rode in through the Adrianople gate at Stamboul, down the narrow streets, past the Hippodrome and the War Office, across the bridge into Pera and then on to the Pera Palace Hotel. I was a sorry-enough looking object; my horse was lame and exhausted; my khaki suit bespattered with mud and torn in several places, while I had a fortnight's growth of a miserable-looking beard on my chin. As I entered the hotel, the well-dressed crowd drew back before an object at once so dirty and so wild-looking, and the porter came forward with the obvious intention of asking me to leave, when, suddenly recognising who I was, he received me with open arms.

I little expected to see my brother again in Constantinople after his flight from Chorlou with the despatches, and was surprised when the porter informed me that he was upstairs, having returned from Constanza only a few hours previously.

I went upstairs and found my brother, who was as astonished to see me as if I had been a man who had returned from the grave.

Little remains to tell, save that on the following morning Hadji arrived with the cart, which in one week those two wonderful little black horses had drawn 200 miles up hill and down dale, through rivers and seas of mud, over stony mountain paths and through raging torrents.

I gave Hadji a sovereign for his pains, whereupon, in the foyer of the hotel, he kissed my hand, saying that he desired nothing save that Allah might bless and protect me, and then went off to buy a young wife, whom he had long coveted—at least so Goupa assured me, and Goupa had a long record of mendacity to atone for.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CAPTURE OF RODOSTO

To judge from the description which my brother gave me of the state of the Turkish Army between Chorlou and Chataldja, I thought it extremely unlikely that the fugitives would ever stop at the famous lines. In common with almost everyone else in Constantinople, I expected to see a mass of starving, disbanded soldiery back in Stamboul, and possibly an uprising against the Christian section of the inhabitants. But we did not reckon on two factors which saved the situation. The first was the extreme state of exhaustion of the fugitives, which caused them to halt at Hademkeuy, where an effort was made to supply them with food, and the second, the large reinforcements of Nazim (regular troops) which the Turks were just beginning to bring up from Smyrna and from the Armenian frontier.

These men were pushed to the front with great rapidity, and it was their bayonets which finally checked the rout at the lines of Chataldja. But for nearly two weeks after the battle the situation was extremely critical, and had the Bulgarians been able to follow up their victory more quickly, they would have encountered no organised resistance, and a few rounds from the dreaded Creusot field guns would have started all the fugitives on the run once again, and even if the fresh arrivals from Asia had put up a

good fight, they were not numerous enough at this time to check an attack in force.

Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War, left Constantinople and took up his quarters at Hademkeuy, living in a railway train just outside the town. It was at this time that we first learnt of the outbreak of cholera at the front. It originally started amongst the troops of the 3rd Army Corps at Viza, having been brought from Asia by the fresh battalions. But it was not amongst the fresh arrivals that it made its greatest ravages, but amongst the unfortunate survivors of Lule Burgas.

These men had, by the time they reached Chataldja, been practically starving for ten days, their only food consisting of raw mealie cobs and anything they could pick up in the countryside. They were thus in a terribly weak state, and fell easy victims to the great epidemic, which spread with extraordinary and almost uncanny rapidity throughout the whole countryside. Not only were they swept away in thousands by cholera, but also by dysentery and enteric, and many cases of dysentery were put down as cholera. It mattered little whether the unfortunate Anatolian peasant paid his last debt to his country by one or by the other of these diseases.

The news of the rout of Lule Burgas caused the utmost consternation in diplomatic circles. A general attack on all Europeans was feared, and warships were hastily demanded. Each nation sent two, and more than three thousand blue-jackets were landed and remained on duty until after the signing of the armistice. It was doubtless a wise and necessary precaution, in view of the bloody history of Constantinople, but, as all remained perfectly peaceful, it did look a little absurd to see the Embassies protected by armed men, and with machine guns behind sand bags on the roofs. The Turks looked on and smiled, and on the whole the

bluejackets were extremely popular with the local townspeople.

The prospect of the taking of Constantinople and the possible looting of the town attracted art dealers from all over the world. They hoped that the priceless heirlooms contained in the Museum, the mythical hordes of gold and silver ware, and heaps of unknown but suspected jewels, including the famous Persian throne, would fall into the hands of the looters, who, in turn, would be only too pleased to part with them for a tenth of their value for cash down. As day by day went by and only a comparatively small number of fugitives, who were easily kept in hand, returned to Constantinople from the front, the disappointment was keen, and these gentry, who had come so far to fill Bond Street, the Rue de la Paix, and Fifth Avenue with the spoils of Byzantium, went away very disapppointed.

I think almost every European and certainly every war correspondent hoped to see the triumphal entry of King Ferdinand, at the head of his legions, into Constantinople. This was needed to give a grand dramatic *finale* to the campaign. There were many who wished to be present at the solemn ceremony of substituting the Cross for the Crescent on the dome of Saint Sofia. Many well-known writers commenced their accounts of the march of Ferdinand's legions through the Golden Gate, and the exit of the Turks into Asia Minor after an occupation of six hundred years.

It seemed to us, who had come straight from the battle-field, that the Bulgarians could perform any miracle or feat of arms they chose. They appeared now as a mythical monster, who had only to open his jaws and swallow up whole tracts of country and whole armies. It seemed incredible that the beaten Turk, worn-out, starving, and

hopelessly mismanaged, could ever again rally or offer any resistance in the field. For a few days it was continuously rumoured that the Bulgarians had swept past Chataldja and were hammering at the gates of the city. But it took a very short time for these wild fancies to pass, and then those of us who settled down to examine the situation calmly and dispassionately, soon realised that it would be quite impossible for the Bulgarian armies to advance against Chataldja for a very considerable period of time.

The distance from Lule Burgas to Chataldja is, I believe, some hundred and forty kilometres. This takes time for an army to travel, more especially in a country where there are no roads and where the railway is no longer available. We knew the Bulgarians must be absolutely exhausted after their prolonged exertions, and that, before they could risk an advance on the capital, they would have to look after the immense number of wounded on their hands, replenish their ammunition supply, and entirely reorganise their commissariat, so as to be able to feed a large army, three hundred miles away from its base, in a country which had already been swept by the ravages of war and which could offer them nothing.

Then, again, we knew they had Adrianople on their hands, and there were some who were of the opinion that they would rest content with having driven the Turks back to Chataldja and would now concentrate all their efforts on taking the fortress, using the army which had been successful at Lule Burgas, as a covering force.

In these circumstances, Donohoe and myself decided it would be useless to go to the lines of Chataldja for some days, and that we would learn more by hovering on the flank of the army, or even by remaining between the advancing Bulgarians and the retiring Turks. We there-

fore decided to leave for Rodosto by the first available steamer. Our main object in going there was to recover our motor-car, which we had left in charge of Mr. Streater, the Consul, and also of Donohoe's dragoman.

We felt it was of the utmost importance to bring the car to Constantinople, so as to be able to pass rapidly to and fro between the city and the lines of Chataldja, and also to have it at our disposal for the rapid dispatch of cables from the front. Therefore on Saturday, November 9th, we left Constantinople in a small steamer for Rodosto, where we arrived the same evening at 5 p.m.

On our arrival at this prosperous little port, we found many Turkish merchant vessels, both steamers and sailing craft, anchored in the roadstead, together with the old Turkish battleship "Masudia" and a torpedo-boat.

All was quiet, as the Bulgarians had not yet approached the town, although their presence within eight kilometres (five miles) had been reported. There was, therefore, a strong undercurrent of unrest running throughout the Levantine population, whilst hundreds of others were only awaiting some means of transportation.

On my arrival I dined with Mr. Streater, at whose house I found Lionel James, who kindly gave me a *résumé* of all that had passed since my departure for Constantinople. I learned definitely that the Bulgarians had not occupied Chorlou until Thursday night, November 7th; up to which day a small force of Turks, remnants from the field of Lule Burgas, had remained in possession, but had retreated on Chataldja on the approach of the enemy's cavalry. The Turkish force, which numbered about 3,000, was composed of some infantry and the remainder of Sali Pasha's independent cavalry division. I also learned that a large force of Servians, with artillery, had been seen passing through Muradli, evidently with the purpose of strengthen-

ing the Bulgarian army in its assault on the lines of Chataldja.

The proximity of the Bulgarians at Chorlou had naturally aroused the alarm of the citizens of Rodosto, who had been expecting a visit from the enemy all the previous week. On Thursday, November 7th, the advance posts of the enemy were reported to be only seven kilometres off on the Rodosto-Muradli road, and therefore, after a consultation with the foreign Consuls, the heads of the various religious communities, who make up these Levantine towns, sinking their life-long quarrels on dogma in the face of the common danger, sallied forth for the first time in their lives with a common policy, namely, formally to hand over Rodosto to the enemy. Unfortunately, on their arrival where the Bulgarians had been reported, they found no trace of the invader, and were obliged to return to the town with their formal act of submission unaccomplished.

On Friday, November 8th, the battleship "Masudia," together with a torpedo-boat, arrived off the port, and the military authorities under Colonel Remzi, either on receipt of instructions from Constantinople or else gaining confidence from the big guns of the warship, decided to defend the town, in spite of the sustained supplications of the united divines.

This was the position on our arrival on Saturday night, November 9th. We found our motor safe where we had left it, and on Sunday morning Donohoe and myself motored out. We found the Turkish advance posts just outside the town, but they made no effort to stop us, and we motored on for another mile, when, on some high ground we discovered a line of vedettes, whose soldierly bearing and military formation aroused our suspicions as to their identity. We therefore alighted from the car, turned it hastily round, so as to be ready for immediate retreat, and examined them at our leisure.

[*Photo Ismet Bey*

TRAIN CROWDED WITH REFUGEES AND SOLDIERS ESCAPING FROM THE FRONT.

Beyond a doubt they were Bulgarians, and as we were only a quarter of a mile away from them, we hastily retired to the line of the Turkish outposts. Here a further examination showed Rodosto to be completely surrounded by the enemy's cavalry, and all the roads radiating from it cut off. Here we also encountered Colonel Remzi, the commandant, who informed us that he intended to defend Rodosto with the aid of the warship. The force at his disposal was quite adequate for such a task, consisting of isolated detachments from the 2nd Army Corps, some of whom, after the *débâcle* at Lule Burgas, had taken the road to Rodosto to make good their escape, rather than the common line of retreat to Chataldja.

Together with some gendarmes and old reservists collected in the town, the total force at Colonel Remzi's disposal numbered about 1,000 men. Of these, only about half were properly armed, the rest carrying old, obsolete, worn-out Martini and Gras rifles. The Turks, with their customary apathy, were leaving everything to chance and making no effort to entrench their position, preferring to save themselves this unpleasant labour, but utilising some petty rises in the ground, or else hiding behind the outer houses of the town. There was no scheme of defence, no supplies of reserve ammunition, no guns, and no dressing stations.

We then returned to the house of Mr. Streater to lunch, and had just sat down when a mighty roar from one of the guns of the "Masudia" brought everyone to his feet. This was followed by a series of broadsides from the four-inch and eight-inch guns of that vessel, which shook every house in the town and caused an almost indescribable panic amongst the Greek and Armenian population. There was a general stampede of gesticulating men, panic-stricken women, and howling children towards the Consulates, which are all situated close together on the sea front.

Never have I seen an entire population so scared. They tumbled over one another to obtain shelter under the foreign flags, and every time a gun of the "Masudia" thundered forth, it was followed by a prolonged echo of shrieks, howls, groans, and wailing, such as only a mixed Levantine community can produce in times of trouble. Lionel James, Donohoe, and myself did our best to calm the fear of the women and children, but for some time with little effect, the populace not being able to discriminate between a gun being fired and a bursting shell, and thinking the Bulgarians were shelling the town. But after a time, the novelty of the sound having worn off, the tears were dried, the men ventured to saunter forth into the streets, and the women, pressing their children closely to them, took shelter in the cellars.

We were besieged with anxious inquiries. Would the enemy fire on the town? Would the warship bombard the town? Would the Bulgarians take it by assault? Would there be a general massacre? Of course we replied in the negative, without having great faith in our own optimism.

About two o'clock the sound of rifle fire from all sides of Rodosto showed that the enemy were approaching, and soon the defenders were replying vigorously. Having calmed the populace, we climbed the highest pinnacle to view the engagement. We saw the Turkish outposts rapidly retiring, firing at long range on the Bulgarian or Servian infantry. I am unable to say to which army they belonged. It was a pathetic sight to watch the blue-coated gendarmes doing their best to keep off the invaders with rifles out of date twenty years ago, and sending up great columns of smoke after each discharge.

The Bulgarians developed a strong attack on the west of the town over ground which gave them considerable cover, but the Turkish regulars in this quarter valiantly held their

own, encouraged rather than materially assisted by the deafening broadsides from the "Masudia," which fired all her guns at objects the marksmen could not possibly see, and with little harm to the enemy, but which only served still further to terrify the good citizens. In fact, it seemed as if the Turkish sailors, in their efforts to reach the enemy, would blow off the upper stories of the houses near the seashore, and some of the Consuls, to avoid this contingency, took down their flags, which were facing landwards, and hoisted them seawards, to remind the "Masudia," which was evidently revelling in this opportunity of distinguishing herself, of her international responsibilities.

The engagement now became hotter, and Donohoe and myself, having captured our chauffeur, who, evidently anticipating some such move, had carefully hidden himself, entered our car, and motored out towards the Muradli road. Having turned the car round, and leaving it under cover, we joined the advanced Turkish posts, which were firing from behind houses, chiefly without even looking over the walls or taking aim. It was evident that Rodosto could be carried at any moment the enemy developed a sufficient force at any one point, but throughout the afternoon they contented themselves with feeling the position, and evidently were without artillery, as they made no effort to fire on the "Masudia" or on the town.

The moment our car had moved to the front, the Turkish unemployed, men and boys, gained courage and followed us in hundreds to the firing line, saying they were quite safe as long as they remained with Englishmen. But this concentration, which we tried in vain to break up, speedily attracted the enemy's fire, and, thinking discretion the better part of valour, we retreated to the motor-car, followed by the whole crowd, running as fast as their legs would carry them.

For some time the car stuck and refused to move, but fortunately the defence held good, and we got her back to the Consulate. The enemy's bullets were now whistling in hundreds over the tops of the houses, and hardly a soul was to be seen, all having taken to their cellars, but the "Masudia's" guns still thundered forth, and the enemy, uncertain what force was on his front, did not press home and carry the outskirts with the bayonet.

I have already mentioned that a number of Turkish vessels, steamers, and sailing ships were anchored in the roadstead early in the day, engaged in taking off refugees. As soon as the "Masudia" started shooting they all, without exception, hauled up their anchors and made for Constantinople, leaving Rodosto to look after itself.

We three English correspondents thus found ourselves in an awkward position, as we had no means of escape, and should the town be taken by the Bulgarians, we would become prisoners of war, and thus cease to be of any further utility to our respective papers. We tried to secure a sailing ship, a fishing smack, or even a rowing boat, but in vain, and things were looking extremely black for us when about five o'clock the "Marmora" mail boat, flying the French flag, put into the port, anchoring a long way out.

Immediately there was a rush of refugees to make their escape in small boats to her. Thanks to the French agent, we secured a boat, and were allowed to leave after a prolonged parley with the authorities, who required passes from us. Our departure was the signal for a fresh panic, as those citizens of Rodosto attributed it to fear alone. There was a general rush for the quays, but the soldiers, hearing that the "Marmora" express was already crowded, refused to allow others to embark, which caused the wildest lamentations. With the utmost difficulty, and by sheer fighting,

we reached the ship and fought our way aboard. The gangway was then hoisted.

From that moment, until we sailed, a crowd of boats hovered round us, the refugees imploring to be taken on board, and offering to pay any sum for a passage ; but as the boat is built to carry about 200 persons, and some 1,500 were crowded on her, the captain remained adamant. When his decision became known a perfect babel of discordant cries, shrieks, curses, and prayers arose from the darkness, which had now settled over this unpleasant scene, and lasted until we sailed. Some in their desperation tried to climb up the sides, abandoning their baggage, their friends, and relatives.

The "Masudia" continued her bombardment until nightfall, and almost the last shot she fired burst prematurely, sweeping the harbour with fragments of an 8-inch shell. We were obliged to abandon our motor-car, and Lionel James was also obliged to abandon his, to the care of the British Consul, hoping to ship them to Constantinople under more peaceful conditions, if the enemy did not seize them as spoils of war. I learnt later from a refugee, who came by an Italian ship which called at Rodosto after our departure, that the military authorities had temporarily commandeered our cars to carry petrol to the Turkish quarter of the town, as they intended to burn it down if the Bulgarians attempted to enter.

Neither James, Donohoe, nor myself were ever destined to have another ride in our cars during the campaign, and I am extremely doubtful if we shall ever see them again. When we left Rodosto we placed them in charge of Streater, the Consul, and also left Donohoe's dragoman and our chauffeur with instructions to ship them by the first available steamer to Constantinople. Our former chauffeur, whom we had with us at Lule Burgas, had had enough of

the campaign and ran away to Roumania, and we never saw him again. We were therefore obliged to obtain another in Constantinople, and we took this man with us to Rodosto. Sunday evening, November 10th, was the last time we have ever heard of or seen either the car, the chauffeur, or the dragoman. The protection of the Consul was of little use, as Streater left his post early on Monday morning, November 11th, and decided he would be more safe and comfortable in Constantinople. Two days later the Bulgarians occupied the town.

After this, all remains a blank, and, up to the time of writing we have never heard a single word from either the chauffeur or the dragoman, neither have their despairing mothers, wives, sisters, and children in Constantinople. The mystery is almost inexplicable, unless both were seized as prisoners and sent back to Bulgaria. Of course there remains the alternative that they may be dead. But who would kill them? If they are alive, why have they not written, if not to us, at least to their wives? Steamers have called there many times since, and I believe a regular service was resumed after the signing of the armistice, but not a sign has either of these men made to anyone of his safety.

Of course it is useless to comment on the fate of the cars, until we know what has become of those who were left in charge of them. Perhaps they are running cheap trips to the neighbouring battlefields. Perhaps the Bulgarians have forced them to work in their service, and our beautiful Panhard may now be conveying some Savoff or Popoff on his daily rounds. Personally, I am not very hopeful of ever seeing it again.

We had a terrible time after our return to Constantinople, and until we finally escaped to England, trying to comfort the wives, families, friends, and relatives of these

two men. They would besiege the Pera Palace Hotel, begging us for information which we were quite unable to give them. Sometimes in their frenzy they declared we knew they were dead and were merely concealing the truth. What could we do? We knew no more than they did.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER

On Wednesday, November 13th, Donohoe, my brother, and myself left Constantinople for the lines of Chataldja. The appearance of the city was even more desolate than before we had left to join the Grand Army of Thrace. The last vestige of wheeled traffic had disappeared from the streets, and Stamboul had more than ever the appearance of a plague-stricken city. The gold-merchants, the dealers in precious stones, and all those who traded in wares of value, had removed their goods from the bazaars to the vaults of the foreign banks; for there was considerable apprehension among certain sections of the community lest, in the event of the lines of Chataldja being forced by the Bulgarians, the routed Turkish soldiers would pillage and burn the city, sooner than allow it to fall once more into the hands of Christians.

The Turkish Cabinet itself was doubtful as to whether an effective resistance could be offered to the enemy at Chataldja, so disheartening were the reports of disorder and disease among the remnants of the Grand Army of Thrace. Even Nazim Pasha at one time gave way to the general despondency and declared that he could not hold the lines, and on Sunday, November 10th, the Cabinet seriously discussed the advisability of abandoning Constantinople and

of transferring the seat of government to Brusa in Asia Minor.

Meanwhile, fresh troops belonging almost entirely to the Nizam army, and of a far better quality than the undisciplined Redifs that had fought at Lule Burgas, were being hurried to the front from the vilayets of Asia Minor. The Turks at the eleventh hour had decided to denude the Armenian frontier of troops, upon which some of their best divisions were stationed. We saw several regiments belonging to the army corps from Trebizond pass through Constantinople, and were very much struck by their appearance. The troops from the Yemen under the command of the famous Izzet Pasha were also beginning to arrive, and the Government had by now brought up most of the regular troops from the vilayet of Smyrna, whither they had originally been sent to cope with a possible Italian invasion.

As before the outbreak of hostilities, it was utterly impossible to obtain any reliable news of what was happening in the trenches at Chataldja, although they were only twenty miles distant from Constantinople, but, as one by one the correspondents arrived from the front, each had a different story to tell of the sufferings and disorganisation of the Turkish Army.

On Friday, Major Vasfi, the Censor, sent a message to the correspondents, saying that he would like to see them all at the Pera Palace at six o'clock. Donohoe and I thought it advisable to stay away after our flight from Constanza, and so my brother was deputed to attend the conference.

At six o'clock a score or so correspondents were seated round Major Vasfi in the hall of the hotel. Major Vasfi started by reproving us for our unceremonious departure from him and the army, whereupon a dispute at once broke out as

to whether the correspondents had abandoned the army or the army the correspondents. It was finally settled that the army was at fault. Then a Frenchman started blaming Major Vasfi, because he had not been informed in time of the departure of the Circassian horsemen to the front on the previous day, so that he could take a photograph of them, whereupon I suggested that, as they would probably be coming back in a few days, he would then have an excellent opportunity. After which an Austrian started a long tirade, in the course of which he pointed out that he was a hero who had given his life blood for the Turks in Tripoli, and in return he had overheard Turkish officers calling him a dirty spy. I pointed out to him that, being a correspondent, that was exactly what he was. Finally, the Censor gave us the daily account of a Turkish victory ten miles north of Viza, and offered to pass any telegrams that we might wish to send on the subject.

We were now able to glean a knowledge of what had been happening in the other theatres of war from the European papers arriving in Constantinople. Usküb, Monastir, and Salonica had fallen in turn, and from every side came the same story of the Turkish lack of organisation and failure to provide the army with food. We were also able to read the lurid reports of Lieutenant Wagner, the correspondent of the *Reichspost* with the victorious Bulgarian Army.

Writing from the "Headquarters of the Bulgarian Army," Lieutenant Wagner described a bloody battle, in which the Turks lost 40,000 men killed and wounded, as having taken place in and around Chorlou a few days after the battle of Lule Burgas; and yet we who were there saw nothing of the battle. He ends up his despatch with the following words :—

"Still more terrible was the fighting at Chorlou, which

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

ARTILLERY ON THE MARCH.

must have resembled that at the Beresina. Even to-day in many places the water is dammed by corpses and war material, and red with the blood of dead and wounded."

They must have been very sanguinary wounded, for the river at Chorlou, being swollen by heavy rains at that time, was running at about 12 knots, and yet for days after the fight it was stained with blood and blocked with corpses!

There is another peculiarity I have noticed amongst the soldiers of all nations, they do not fight for preference in the middle of a river, and whenever possible the wounded avoid crawling into a river to die.

In addition, the following despatch from Lieutenant Wagner appeared in the *Reichspost*, of Thursday, November 7th :—

"It had already been seen in Turkish military circles that the defence of the Chataldja line was untenable and useless. The Turkish troops fled in breakneck style to Constantinople, without paying regard to the cries of their officers.

"The situation at Constantinople is desperate. The city is full of refugee soldiers, who, half-starved, take revenge upon the defenceless Christians.

"The left wing of the Bulgarian army, after a determined struggle, reached the heights east of Strandja, driving the right Turkish wing into the forest district west of Derkos Lake. The Bulgarians are strongly reinforced at Strandja and Yenikoei to give a final blow to the Chataldja positions south of the Derkos Lake. The centre and right Bulgarian wing forced the conquered Turkish rearguard along the railway line and through Cauta, and will continue the attack upon the Turkish positions on both sides of the village of Chataldja.

"The immediate fall of all the Turkish positions is now a dead certainty. The Turkish artillery has very insufficiently supported the infantry thus far, and has seldom remained till the last moment. Insufficient action with the too early retreat of the Turkish artillery left the retreating Turkish

infantry defenceless against the attacks of the onstorming Bulgarians and firing of the Bulgarian batteries so that the retreat almost resembled a flight.

Lieutenant Wagner heads his despatch "Bulgarian Army Headquarters," but he does not say where the headquarters were, neither does he date his despatch. The despatch appeared in the Vienna *Reichspost* of November 7th, and must, therefore, have been sent off at the latest on the previous day, which brings us to Wednesday, November 6th. The battle which it describes, therefore, must have taken place on Tuesday, November 5th, at the latest. Now on Monday, November 4th, Seabury Ashmead-Bartlett was at Cherkeskeuy, 80 miles north-east of Chataldja, and there was no sign of the Bulgarians; on Tuesday he was at Sinekli—still no sign of the Bulgarians, while the Turkish peasants and soldiers continued their retreat unmolested. On Wednesday, November 6th, he was actually at Chataldja and yet he saw no signs of an attack on the lines, no signs of the taking of Derkos—which, incidentally, lies behind the Turkish position—while the Turkish headquarters were still in telegraphic communication with Cherkeskeuy.

The remnants of Abdullah's army of Thrace only began to reach the lines on November 7th, whereas Lieutenant Wagner describes how, at least two days previously, they had abandoned their positions and "fled in breakneck style to Constantinople."

Then he goes on to describe how Constantinople is "full of refugee soldiers, who, half-starved, take revenge upon the defenceless Christians." At the time there were no starving soldiers in Constantinople, and later on, when a certain number of sick and stragglers found their way to the city, they were segregated in the mosques under a strong guard, and at no time did they "take revenge upon the Christians."

In a later despatch dated "Bulgarian Army Headquarters, Nov. 7 (10 p.m.)" Lieutenant Wagner goes on to describe how:—

"The Bulgarian attack on the Chataldja positions goes successfully forward. The positions taken by the Third Bulgarian Army on the Turkish right wing at Delijunus, form an excellent centre for the continuation of the attack.

"On the south line, also, the Bulgarian troops have already taken possession of the principal positions. The fall of the whole of the Chataldja positions is imminent.

"Already yesterday the advanced troops of the Third Army, fighting continually, had pressed forward to the Tarfa-Kalfakeni line, and early this morning the First Army drove the Turkish troops from the heights near Chataldja.

"The battle is now raging along the whole line, and Europe may expect to receive at any moment the laconic announcement of the fall of the famous lines of Chataldja.

"Once more the Bulgarians are acting with unexampled dash.

"I just learn that the columns of the Third Army, proceeding south of the Derkos Lake, have captured the positions at Delijunus, on the Turkish right wing, and that the columns of the Third Army, also going southwards, are advancing victoriously."

Truly prophetic utterances, in view of the fact that the Bulgarian attack on the lines of Chataldja did not begin until November 17th, and that it was then easily repulsed by the Turks. When this faint-hearted attack of the Bulgarians on the Turkish positions did begin, Lieutenant Wagner, undeterred by the exposure of his former prophecies, reported:—

"After four days of sanguinary fighting, the Bulgarian army has succeeded in breaking through the centre of the Turkish positions at Chataldja in the direction of Hademkeuy,

and in completely rolling up the Turkish defences. The advance will be continued with the greatest energy, in order to force the Turkish troops as far as possible from Constantinople."

The course of events will show that the fighting at Chataldja was never of a sanguinary nature ; that the battle only lasted two days, and that, far from rolling up the Turkish forces, the Bulgarians were themselves forced to retreat.

But Lieutenant Wagner did not hesitate to state in the course of another despatch, that the gallant, but defeated Turkish troops behaved with shocking brutality.

"The atrocities committed by the retreating Turks are awful. All the villages were burned to ashes; all the Christians were massacred, and dozens of female corpses have been found with mutilated bodies. The Anatolian Redifs, especially, behaved like wild beasts."

Poor, gentle and kind-eyed, courteous Anatolian Redifs ! You were starving and disorganised, and yet we marched with you all the way from Lule Burgas to Chataldja, rather more than 140 miles, without a passport or any other paper to show who we were, and with a cartload of equipment and stores, and none of you ventured to molest us. We were Christians, and King Ferdinand had proclaimed a Holy War, and yet one of you offered to share his last crust of bread with us, because we gave him a drink of water.

Nor did we see you massacre and ill-treat Christians or mutilate their women-folk, although, when you were starving, they used to shut their doors in your faces and refuse to give you of the food which they possessed in plenty. Their flocks also you left untouched in your extremity, and their chickens and their corn. Few European armies would have behaved in

such a gentle and forbearing manner as you. Few races could show such a spirit of tolerance.

One day at the height of the crisis, when the Bulgarians were said to be on the eve of entering Constantinople and of setting up the cross on St. Sofia, we watched a Greek religious procession passing through the streets of Pera. A priest dressed in robes of silk and gold went before, carrying high the cross, while others in gaudy raiment followed after, chanting a solemn hymn as they went. And no attempt was made by the Turks to molest these Greeks. We wondered what would have happened in Piccadilly if, when the army of a Roman Catholic nation, which had invaded England with the avowed intention of stamping out Protestantism, was on the eve of entering London, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster had gone in procession through the streets carrying the Host. We remembered the outcry in the Press, when he had mooted doing such a thing in a period of profound peace, and trembled for the fate of him and his priests.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHOLERA

We were much amused to read one evening an official announcement by the Ottoman News Agency, that forty of the most prominent Ulemas had been dispatched to the army at Chataldja, in order to excite the fanaticism of the soldiers by preaching an "official Holy War." They did not, however, succeed in awakening any fanaticism, and the dispatch of forty train loads of bread would probably have been more efficacious.

Meanwhile thousands of refugees with their bullock-wagons and flocks were arriving daily at the city's gates. To most of them entrance was debarred, and they had to take refuge in the cemeteries beyond the city walls, but many were camped in the streets of Stamboul. The resultant filth and congestion beggars description and was certain to cause a lot of disease. These unfortunate women and children were being transhipped as fast as possible to Asia Minor; but what will happen to them there and who will provide for their support, none can tell. Their fate is in the lap of the gods. Many of them have lost their fathers, sons, or brothers. Even if their menfolk should escape death in the war, they will never be able to find their families again, for the people do not mean to return to Europe. I talked to one old peasant, and he said:—"We

are going to seek in Asia the peace that we have never found in the land of the Giaours."

Meanwhile we heard that cholera had broken out among the troops at Chataldja, and that a number of cases had arrived at Constantinople. One day therefore we visited the Cekedje railway station at an hour when we knew that a train load of sick and wounded men was expected from the front, and we were able to see for ourselves the truth of the report. With characteristic carelessness, the Turks had placed a number of cholera cases among the non-infectious patients, and quietly sent them off to Stamboul to spread the dread disease among its teeming population. At the station the cholera patients were sorted out from among the others, and placed in sheds which were already half full of dead and dying men, while those who handled them were profusely sprayed with disinfectant. Then they were left uncared for until such time as death should end their sufferings.

We afterwards visited the British Red Cross Society's admirable hospital in the old Museum, where we were able to see the condition of the wounded men arriving from the front. Only about 20 per cent. of those who had been wounded at the battle of Lule Burgas ever got back to Constantinople, the remainder perishing from exposure and neglect, while trying in vain to drag themselves away from the battlefield. Many of those who did survive, only reached the hospitals in the capital ten or fifteen days after the battle, during which time their wounds had remained untended, with the result that they had festered and were covered with maggots and vermin. Still in most cases they managed to recover, thanks to their wonderful constitutions and non-alcoholic habits.

On the evening of Tuesday, November 12th, the Turkish Government announced, through the medium of the Otto-

man Agency, that no correspondents could be permitted to return to the front.

Nevertheless, as our preparations were completed, and we believed an attack on the lines of Chataldja to be imminent, we decided to start at dawn on the following day, Wednesday, November 13th. As on the occasion of our first departure for the front, we were obliged to take all supplies with us, as we could hope to find but little food in the country through which the Turkish army had passed. We did not know how long the second phase of operations was likely to last, and so we had purchased supplies for one month.

Our party consisted of my brother and myself, Martin Donohoe of the *Chronicle*, Bryant, our guide and interpreter, Goupa, dragoman and cook, Hadji, our old Albanian groom, and another groom of Donohoe's. To carry the food and equipment necessary for seven persons, we were obliged to hire a second cart and two horses, in addition to the araba drawn by the two little black ponies, which had done such wonders on the retreat from Lule Burgas. We also hired a Minerva motor-car for the purpose of getting back quickly to Constantinople with our despatches, should occasion arise.

We were up by six in the morning packing up the two carts, which were sent on in charge of Goupa, with orders to proceed to the station at Kuchuk Chekmedche, and there to await our arrival.

Kuchuk Chekmedche is situated on the coast about 14 miles from Constantinople, on the banks of the lake of Chekmedche, and is about seven miles distant from the lines of Chataldja. We ourselves arranged to follow at about 12.30 p.m., Donohoe in the motor-car, and myself and my brother with our guide Bryant on horseback. Shortly before that hour my brother went round to the stable to

fetch our saddle horses, and was met by the Greek proprietor, who presented a bill for £10 for the five days which our horses had spent in his stable, and this despite the fact that we had provided their food ourselves. We told him as politely as possible that his bill was excessive and that, as we were pressed for time, we could argue the matter out after our return from Chataldja. He also told him, as he raised objections, that the Pera Palace Hotel or the Ottoman Bank, where we had our account, would give security for the money that we owed him. But this did not suit the rascally Levantine, who, never having done an honest action in his life, was incapable of trusting anybody else.

Unwilling to continue a discussion which was becoming undignified, my brother started to lead his horse from the stable, whereupon the proprietor seized the bridle in an endeavour to prevent him. My brother was so exasperated by this traditional insult from one whom experience had taught us to consider as an inferior species, that he struck him in the face, knocking him down. The man picked himself up, screaming like a woman, and disappeared into the coach-room, whence he reappeared a moment afterwards armed with an iron bar, and followed by three stablemen armed with heavy sticks. In face of such overpowering odds my brother was obliged to beat a strategic retreat to the hotel, whence we returned a few minutes later armed with hunting crops.

We found that the stablemen had closed the coach door and were prepared to stand a siege, but we at once delivered a frontal attack, forced open the door, and precipitated ourselves on the enemy's forces within. A free fight ensued, in which first fists, then hunting crops and sticks were freely employed. Finally, the Greeks drew their knives and attempted to mutilate the horses, but my brother drew his

Mannlicher automatic pistol, and drove them trembling into a corner, while we led the horses round to the front of the hotel. We were followed by the proprietor and his underlings, whose gesticulations, remonstrances, and bleeding faces soon caused a large and excited crowd to gather round us. Then a policeman arrived on the scene, and, fearing detention and endless litigation, we told Bryant to calm the proprietor's anger with a sovereign. But Bryant, who knows the country, gave the money to the policeman, upon which our path became strewn with roses.

We were doubtful as to whether we should be allowed to pass the city gates, in view of the official announcement that no correspondents would be allowed to return to the front. And, sure enough, we were stopped by the military police at the Golden Gate, and questioned by the officer in charge as to whether we were war correspondents. We replied that we were not, but harmless English gentlemen in the act of taking a little ride out to San Stefano—and this despite the fact that we were laden with water bottles, revolvers, haversacks, and all the varied equipment of war.

The officer took our names and telephoned to the War Office for instructions, receiving the order to send us back immediately. We feigned complete indifference, chatted with the officer in a friendly manner for about a quarter of an hour, offered him cigarettes, and finally pointed out what a pity it was that we should be deprived of our ride on such a fine day. We so worked on his better feelings that, in direct contravention of his orders, he informed us that we might go on our way to San Stefano, and begged us to stop and take coffee with him on our return. This example is typical of the anæmia of the Turkish character, and the laxity of officials.

It was a lovely day—bright sunshine and almost tropical heat, despite the advanced season of the year. We rode

out through the Golden Gate, through which the Turkish conquerors rode into the city five centuries ago, leaving behind us the noble castellated walls of the city, built when it was Byzantium; now crumbling to ruin and seared with deep cracks. The Sea of Marmora was all golden in the sunlight and beyond we could see the faint outline of the purple hills of Asia Minor with their mantle of eternal snow. The country round us was covered with the flocks of refugees searching the sun-baked soil in vain for pasture. Women from one of the refugee camps were filling their pitchers with water from a stagnant pool, oblivious of the fact that in it lay the putrefying body of an ox. We saw a large number of sick and useless soldiers straggling off to the rear, while many men were lying untended by the road-side in a dying condition—and that within ten miles of the capital. Some of them had the appearance of cholera victims. We reached Kuchuk Chekmedche about four o'clock in the afternoon after a very hot ride, and there we found Donohoe in the motor car and Goupa with the stores awaiting us.

We decided to spend the night in the inn at Chekmedche, as we only had about another hour and a half daylight, and it was useless to think of pushing on before the morrow. Chekmedche lay very low on the shores of the lake; it was a miserable, dirty village, and must have been a fever-stricken haunt, for the atmosphere was fœtid and sodden, and peopled by myriads of mosquitoes. The village was crowded with troops and we had some difficulty in finding stabling for our horses. We found a room with three beds for ourselves in the local inn, and Goupa prepared our evening meal in the common room downstairs, which was crowded with Greek peasants and Turkish soldiers.

We found Nicholson, a cinematograph operator, and Grant, of the *Daily Mirror*, in the inn, and they dined

with us at the little deal table which Goupa had spread with a white cloth in one corner of the bar, while the natives looked in astonishment at the lavish meal of which we partook.

It was very hot cholera weather, and mosquitoes were dying in battalions against the glass of our lamp, but from outside the moan of the waves brought a little coolness to our parched senses.

When it came to the opening of the whiskey we discovered to our horror that the soda water had been left behind. Here was a predicament, indeed, for we were in a country where cholera was raging and all the streams and springs were contaminated by the insanitary customs of the Turks. So it was decided that my brother should return to Stamboul at dawn in order to get the two large cases of Mattoni water. Next day, after he had returned with two huge cases of Mattoni water, each containing twenty-five quart bottles, we decided to make for the village of Aya Yorgi (St. George), which was some five miles in rear of Hademkeuy, the centre of the Turkish position, and there to establish our head-quarters. We chose Aya Yorgi because it lay in the hills off the main road, and we hoped to find it free of soldiers, for we were anxious to avoid camping in proximity to the Turkish army, owing to the terrible stories of cholera that we had heard.

For some distance our road lay along the shores of the sapphire blue lake, past banks of golden rushes peopled with wild duck and other waterfowl, and then wound on into a well-watered valley lying between rugged volcanic hills. From time to time the sight of the decaying corpses of oxen or horses, or of some sick man who had lain down by the roadside to die, reminded us that we were in the midst of war.

We watered our horses at a spring flowing over moss

and ferns from out the heart of a great white rock, such as Moses must have struck with his rod when the children of Israel were dying of thirst in the wilderness; then we started on a long climb up to the hills. We reached St. George about four o'clock in the evening, only to find, to our dismay, that a brigade of the second division of the reserve was quartered in it. Every house appeared to be fully occupied, and the atmosphere was full of that peculiarly fœtid scent which always accompanies the insanitary Turkish Army.

We contemplated leaving the village and pitching our tent in the open, but at that moment a staff officer came up to us, and after inquiring who we were, asked us to wait while he made a report to the commandant. He returned shortly afterwards to say that the commandant had ordered him to place a room at our disposal, and to find stabling for our horses. We thanked him, and he committed us to the care of a lieutenant in the Army Service Corps, who was at least fifty years old, and who evidently belonged to the old class of officer promoted from the ranks under the Hamidian *régime*. The antiquated lieutenant found us a room in a house which had once been the summer home of a bygone Sultan's favourite, and which was now occupied by an Armenian priest. It was a handsome room of many windows, looking out over the valley up which we had climbed to the sea beyond, but was devoid of all furniture, save for two divans upon which we slept. After he had seen us comfortably installed, the patriarchal lieutenant informed us through the medium of Bryant that he would not scorn to accept a little backsheesh, and we were only too glad to reward the poor fellow, as he had probably received no pay for months.

We were very tired, having had a long and hot march, so after we had eaten some dinner we settled down for

the night. We had just turned out the lights and were lying in a semi-somnolent condition, congratulating ourselves on having found such comfortable quarters for the night, when there came a loud knocking at the door. We jumped up and opened it, and our friend the staff officer entered, followed by four other persons, saying: "Messieurs, je vous ai apporté vos camarades." We had not the least idea who "vos camarades" were, but we were in no mood to receive visitors, had they been our oldest and dearest friends. From the babel of guttural sounds which issued from them we were able to distinguish that they were Germans, and on striking a light we found ourselves confronted by three German war correspondents and Mr. Frank Otter, the war correspondent of the *Pink-'un*. All were without baggage or provisions and announced their intention of billeting themselves on us. This we did not at all relish, as the room was already overcrowded, so we requested them to find shelter elsewhere. This annoyed the Germans very much, and they made angry remarks about our total want of the spirit of comradeship, and of how in war it was share and share alike. This argument naturally appealed to them as they, through their own improvidence, were without provisions, while we showed obvious manifestation of having food and drink in plenty in the room with us. When our first annoyance at being disturbed had subsided, we gave them something to eat and drink and handed them over to our dragoman, with orders to find them a lodging elsewhere.

Frank Otter we invited to spend the night with us. He told us that he had come by motor car to Chekmedche, and had strolled from that village to St. George. He did not seem to know where he was going, or what he was going to do. He had no stores, not even a horse, but this did not seem to trouble him in the least. He presented a very picturesque appearance, being dressed

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

VICTIMS OF CHOLERA.

in exquisitely fitting tight khaki breeches, a pair of Newmarket leggings, a dark coat, a green waistcoast, and a large white stock, while his face, upon which is the glow of many matutinal libations, was crowned with a scarlet fez. Next morning we had some difficulty in explaining his presence to our friend the staff officer, who said that he had heard of *The Times*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Telegraph*, but never of the *Pink-'un*. So we assured him that it was a military journal which owed its name to the peculiar colour of the British soldiers' coats, upon which he became very friendly, and to Otter's considerable embarrassment started telling him a number of technical and strategic details.

Fond as we were of Frank Otter's company, it was impossible to keep him with us owing to the difficulties of commissariat, and he willingly consented to return to Constantinople when he discovered the denuded state of the country and the ravages of cholera, not wishing—as he quaintly put it—"to die twenty miles away from the nearest bar."

In the afternoon we decided to ride out to Hardemkeuy, in order to reconnoitre the lines of Chataldja, a ride that was destined to be the most gruesome we had ever taken. First we passed through the beautiful valley of Chekmedche which presented an ideal picture of peace. In it were grazing the flocks of the migrating Ottoman peasants, nothing in whose dress, manners, and customs has changed for a thousand years. Pretty veiled women were carrying water on their heads in great pitchers to their camp, where their children were playing in the shelter of some silver birch trees. In the distance the blue lake lay in the sunlight, and the air was filled with the music of many cattle bells.

But on the slope of the hill beyond we were suddenly

brought face to face with the horrors of war. There was a little encampment of brown shelter tents, in front of which were half-a-dozen newly covered-in graves. Beside the graves lay three corpses with blackened, distorted faces, while all around sat or lay some twenty or thirty soldiers in the last stages of disease. Several of them lay on their faces writhing and uttering horrible groans. Several more sat in silence waiting for death to overtake them, gazing with misty, apathetic eyes at the beautiful valley at their feet, down which perhaps their own wives and children were fleeing into Asia, driving their flocks before them. It was a cholera isolation camp, and the men we saw were all dying of that dread disease.

A little further on we met a band of some fifty soldiers coming over the hill. They were staggering along with the hoods of their grey overcoats turned up over their heads. Every now and then one of them would totter and fall by the roadside unheeded by his companions. They were sick men, who, after having rifles and equipment taken from them, had been ordered to march to the rear in search of a hospital.

But these fearful scenes in the rear of the army paled into insignificance when compared with the horrors of Hademkeuy, the headquarters of the Turkish Army, where the remnants of the troops routed at Lule Burgas were finally rallied. As we mounted the last slope which hides the valley in which Hademkeuy lies, we were brought to a standstill by the awful babel of sounds that came from beneath us. We were gazing into the valley of the shadow of death.

In the centre of Hademkeuy lay a great square formed on one side by some barracks, on two others by lines of white hospital tents, and on the fourth by the high road. This square resembled a successful fly-paper in midsummer.

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (left) and Mr. Martin Donohoe, of the "Daily Chronicle," with an Armenian Priest, in whose house they stayed at Aya Yorgi.

It was covered with the corpses of the dead, and the writhing bodies of the living in all attitudes. Some prone, some sitting, some kneeling, some constantly shifting, some with hands clasped as if in supplication. In some parts of the arena the dead were piled in heaps; in others those still living were almost as closely packed.

This shocking lake of misery was being constantly fed by rivulets of stretcher-bearers, bringing in fresh victims from the camps and forts, and by others who crawled in of their own accord, seeming to prefer to end their days in the company of their fellow-men, or else expecting to find succour or relief from their immediate torments. All the tracks leading to this impromptu morgue were clothed with the bodies of those who had died on the road. From time to time empty bullock-wagons would pass through, and the bodies of those in whom life was extinct would be dumped into them, carted out of the village, and thrown into great pits, where sleep thousands of unhappy Anatolian peasants.

There is a station at Hademkeuy, and a train was in the station. It was black with the most wretched specimens of sick humanity seeking to escape from the dread spectre of cholera. The train was leaving for Constantinople, and all who could crawl were endeavouring to secure a place in it, hoping thus to reach a haven of refuge. Some were wounded, some were down with dysentery, others with enteric; others were feeling the spirit spasms of the scourge itself; others were merely sick at heart, unable to stand any longer the constant strain of waiting for an unnatural death; all were trying to escape.

It is the men who went through the awful hardships and sufferings of the retreat after Lule Burgas, who lived for ten days on green corn and on scraps of offal picked up as they marched, who yield up the greatest number of victims on the altar of Asiatic cholera.

Such is the fear of infection that once a soldier is seized with cholera he is regarded by his comrades with whom he has lived, and by whose side he has fought, as a pest to be avoided as if he were the devil himself. Those who fall are left to die where they drop, and no pleadings or prayers will move the living to raise a helping hand, even if they are in a position to do so. We Europeans, who happened to be with the army, were obliged to play the *rôle* of the Pharisees who passed the sick man lying by the roadside without raising a finger to help him. There are many Turkish soldiers and many Europeans who possess the inclinations of the good Samaritan, but in war, when cholera claims its victims by the thousand, those who fall by the way must look for no human assistance. The most distressing feature of the disease is the rapidity with which it works. A man may be perfectly well in the morning; a few hours later he may be writhing on the ground in agony, and a corpse by nightfall.

In the village of St. George, where we were stopping, cholera had broken out. As soon as a man was seized with the disease, he was thrown over the back of a horse, carried beyond the outskirts of the town, and laid on the first patch of open ground, there to die, and when dead his body was covered with a thin layer of earth. These ghastly mounds litter the country. There is no escaping from them. Every village through which we passed has its victims; every road, over which the troops move to the front, is marked by a trail of corpses or of men dying by the roadside; the very air seemed foul with the germs of disease, putrefaction, and decay.

CHAPTER XX

THE ATTACK ON CHATALDJA

We had hoped to remain in concealment at Aya Yorgi until the fighting commenced at Chataldja, and then to ride forward the short remaining distance to the lines and watch the fighting, but all our plans were upset by the arrival of the German correspondents, who were shortly afterwards followed by a number of our English *confrères*. This number of Europeans concentrated in a small village aroused the curiosity of the commandant, and, unknown to us, he communicated with Constantinople, and received orders to send us all back to the town.

All went well until Sunday, November 17th, up to which date we were left unmolested and allowed to ride about the country. At dawn on that day we were aroused by a continuous detonation which sounded like distant thunder, and it became plain that at length the suspense of the last few days was at an end and that the Bulgarian onslaught had commenced. We sent for our horses, and, taking some provisions, were about to ride out to Hademkeuy, when an officer came from the commandant of the village saying we were all to return to Constantinople immediately. This news came as a thunderbolt, and could not have arrived at a more inopportune moment, just when the attack on the lines of Chataldja had commenced. We asked for an

explanation of this strange treatment, and the A.D.C., who seemed very sorry to turn us out, said that an order had been issued by Nazim Pasha on the previous afternoon for the expulsion of all foreigners from the front.

But it is one thing for a Turk to give an order, and quite another for him to enforce it, and neither Donohoe, my brother, nor myself had the least intention of returning to Constantinople. We held a hasty council of war and decided to pack up all our baggage and stores, ostensibly to take the road to Constantinople, and then to turn off and take another route, which would lead us to the front. Packing the carts caused an hour's delay, for on this, as on every other occasion, there were endless difficulties to be overcome. But at length all was ready, and after bidding farewell to the Armenian priest in whose house we had lodged, we mounted our horses, and personally I was very pleased to shake the dust of Aya Yorgi from my feet.

We rode out at the back of the village, pretending to take the route to Constantinople, but the commandant sent after us and said we must take the road to Buyuk Chekmedche, and we had no alternative but to obey his orders. We saw the other correspondents in the village also on the move, for all had received similar orders. We passed down the valley until we came to the railway line, and then turned inland towards the lines of Chataldja. Hidden behind a hill we found a deserted farm, and decided to leave our servants and our baggage there and to ride on to the front. We left instructions with our dragoman to have a meal ready for us on our return, but not to unpack the wagons in case we found it necessary to move elsewhere. Our party was now reduced to four: Donohoe, my brother, Bryant, whom I took as interpreter, and myself. We cantered over the country at a rapid pace, nerved on to fresh exertions by the sound of the cannon, which grew louder and louder every minute.

We had not gone far when we met M—— Bey, an educated Turkish officer who had been military attaché in several European capitals, and who spoke French and German fluently. M—— Bey was now attached to the headquarters staff, being actually employed in looking after the foreign military attachés. We had every reason to fear, therefore, that he would order us to the rear, as he must have been cognisant of the order prohibiting correspondents at the front. Instead, he received us most politely, and proceeded to explain carefully to us the situation of the Turkish Army, ending by saying: "Do not forget to mention in your papers that M—— Bey told you so."

We then made some banal remark about the horrors of cholera, but he seemed indifferent, and proceeded to tell us, with every manifestation of naïve delight, how he carried in his sword-knot a charm presented to him by an English lady. He even went so far as to undo his sword-knot and to produce a vulgar little enamel charm with "Dinna Forget" written upon it in gold—or brass. It had probably been given to him by some light o' love in one of the many cafés chantants in Constantinople, and we went on our way wondering what manner of nation it was that produced staff officers capable of taking joy in such trifles, when all around them the Empire was crumbling to ruin amid scenes of unparalleled horror.

We thought we were clear of all interference and would encounter no further difficulty, but here we made a mistake which landed us in endless trouble and considerable expense. We followed one of the high roads leading to the lines, when we should have cut right across country, avoiding all the roads. We had almost arrived at the point we had selected two days before from which to watch the attack, when, as we were crossing a superb old Roman bridge which spanned a deep gorge, we ran right into a patrol of six gendarmes, who

immediately stopped us and said that they had received orders to send us back to Constantinople. They told us they formed part of a body of seventy gendarmes, especially told off by Nazim Pasha to watch all the roads and to stop any Europeans from approaching the front.

The situation was maddening, as just beyond the ridge was taking place the battle that was to decide the fate of Constantinople. We thought of riding for it, but Bryant assured us that the gendarmes, who were all mounted, would follow us and shoot us down. He begged us to have patience, while he bargained a while with them. "Every man has his price in this country," exclaimed Bryant cheerfully, "only as these fellows are Turks we must go slowly with them, captain. Mustn't hurt their feelings. Nice fellows, very nice fellows. You leave it to me, captain." So we left it to him, and, sitting on the parapet of the bridge, he began an animated and genial conversation with the sergeant in command. Bryant has a wonderful way with the Turks, among whom he is very popular. First of all he offered the lieutenant a cigarette, then a drink of whiskey, shortly after which they embraced, and their conversation became more and more animated.

All this delay was extremely annoying to us, who were longing to put spurs to our horses, and to gallop up to the ridge whence we could see the battle. When we suggested to Bryant that he should hurry, and offered the gendarmes a sovereign each, he appeared greatly shocked and replied in his peculiarly disjointed style: "Can't hurry these fellows, captain. Wouldn't like it. Must go slowly, slowly. Very decent fellows, these gendarmes."

The gendarmes are a fine body of men and up to the time of the Young Turks' revolution were under the command of European officers. Their uniform consists of a tight-fitting blue tunic, blue breeches, top boots, and a cloth turban.

They carry a Mauser or Martini carbine, and two cartridge bandoliers slung across their tunics. They are well-mounted for the most part on hardy Circassian ponies, and also use the wooden Circassian saddle. They possess considerable authority, having the power to arrest any officer found drinking spirits, this being contrary to the Koran. This rule is never enforced, except as an excuse for arresting an officer for political motives, and we afterwards found they had a very pretty taste in whiskey themselves. Finally Bryant concluded his bargains, and we learned that the sergeant in charge of the party, who at first had been loth to disobey his instructions, had finally decided to sell his military virtue and to conduct us to the battlefield at the price of £1 per head for himself and his men.

We breasted the last slope, and there, before us, lay the battlefield, majestic and infernal. A delicate bluish haze lay over all the valley, which was filled with one long continuous roar of gun-fire. On our left was the Lake of Buyuk Chekmedche, and beyond it the open sea. Two Turkish warships were bombarding the Bulgarian outposts on the black mountain ridge that bordered the far side of the lake and extended inland to Chataldja, forming a wall across the centre of the valley. Their shells had destroyed two arches of the Roman causeway which had spanned the head of the lake for nigh two thousand years. Now they were bursting high on the purple hills above the lake, in clouds of smoke and dust. They had set fire to two villages, and two black columns of smoke were rising straight in the air and spreading out like a vast funereal canopy over the valley, which looked like a seething inferno in which Titans were playing some fiendish game of death.

But before I come to my description of the actual fighting, I wish to give a short sketch of the Chataldja lines, and of the position of both armies. They are erroneously called

the lines of Chataldja, because the village of that name is situated at the foot of a high hill some two miles in front of the most advanced Turkish works. They should really be called the lines of Hademkeuy, because this village lies in the centre of the position, half-way between the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea. The lines run in a semicircle from Buyuk Chekmedche on the Sea of Marmora to Kara Burun on the Black Sea.

The centre of the semicircle recedes to take advantage of the high ground, but a line of earthworks has been constructed on a lower ridge, about a mile in advance, thus forming an additional strong protection to the position.

The full extent of the line from the Marmora to the Black Sea is from twenty-five to thirty miles, following the line of the works. But the whole of this distance does not have to be defended by the Turkish army, as the Lake of Buyuk Chekmedche forms a natural protection on the south of the position, and the Forest of Belgrade and Lake Derkos serve a similar purpose to the north. Thus the extremities of the line need only be held by a skeleton force, as it would be almost impossible for an invading army to break through.

In front of the position extending from the north of Lake Buyuk Chekmedche to the Forest of Belgrade is a broad open valley that stretches right up to the base of the hills, at the foot of which lies Chataldja. The position is naturally strong, and could have been rendered almost impregnable, had the work been undertaken in time.

The centre in front of Hademkeuy is, perhaps, the weakest point, although the ground offers but little cover to an attacking force, because here the hills recede, and should it once be forced, both wings of the position would be taken in flank, and the defenders cut off altogether unless they effected their retreat in time.

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

A Trench hastily built by the Turks at Chataldja.

Behind the lines lies the fertile valley of Samarkoff, down which the Russian army advanced in the war of 1878. On the other side of the valley is another line of hills, which would make a second almost impregnable position, were they fortified, but the Turks have erected no works or entrenchments of any sort on them.

Situated amongst these hills are many once prosperous villages, and in them the reserves of the army had been living during the past two weeks, but they were pushed to the front when the action commenced at dawn.

The defences of the lines have been sadly neglected. The so-called works consist merely of infantry lunettes dug out of the earth, and only reinforced by concrete magazines and barracks in a few of the main works round Hademkeuy. The armament of these positions along the main line consists merely of some old Krupp guns, and throughout the engagement I never saw them employed.

The position had not even been connected up by lines of entrenchments, but a good deal had been done to remedy this defect during the previous few days. Field artillery had also been placed in many of the existing works, and special gun emplacements, affording some protection against the enemy's fire, had also been dug.

No good roads connecting the various positions have been made, allowing of the rapid transit of artillery and supplies, and, as far as I know, none of the positions were connected up by telephone or telegraph until after the retreat from Lule Burgas. Yet, in spite of its many defects and the infinite neglect from which the place has suffered in times of peace, 70,000 men, if armed with modern weapons, should be able to hold it indefinitely against any army of any size, provided that their *moral* had not suffered too much from repeated reverses, bad handling, and the ravages of a nerve-destroying disease.

Almost every advantage rests with the defence, because the invading army has to advance over ground affording very little cover, and unless that army possesses siege artillery, which the Bulgarians did not, the field works and so-called forts can only be weakened before an infantry assault by shrapnel. It is true that a certain amount of cover is afforded by an army advancing through the forest of Belgrade, but in this section of the field the Bulgarians could not employ their artillery to the same advantage, and would have to meet the Turkish infantry on ground broken and affording splendid cover.

They were hardly likely then to deliver their main attack on the extreme right of the Turkish line.

Since the *débâcle* of Lule Burgas, an effort had been made to reorganise the army of Thrace and to reform the scattered army corps. Abdullah had either voluntarily retired, or else had been relieved of his command, and Nazim, the Minister of War, was now the supreme chief in the field.

Three of the army corps which took part in the battle of Lule Burgas now occupied the main line of the defence. The first, under Yavir Pasha, held the position from Buyuk Chekmedche to the Ahmed Pass. From the Ahmed Pass to Yasoren, the line was held by the 2nd Corps, and from this point to the Black Sea the defence of the line was entrusted to Mahmoud Mukhtar and the 3rd Corps, which up to the present had distinguished itself more than any other during the war, and was less demoralised than any of the others after the battle of Lule Burgas.

The 4th Corps, under Abouk Pasha, was not in the front line, but was held as a general reserve to the 2nd Corps, to be pushed forward in case of need. Reserves had, in fact, been collected behind all three corps; but the lack of *morale* amongst these men was painfully evident, and they, like the

troops on the main position, were suffering terribly from sickness.

The battle which took place on Sunday, November 17th, was an artillery engagement on an immense scale, with but little infantry fighting. It was evident that the Bulgarians were preparing for an assault on the outlying works by a concentrated bombardment on the advanced positions. From seven in the morning to five o'clock in the afternoon the artillery fire was incessant, and was occasionally broken by the rattle of rifle fire and the buzzing of the machine guns as the enemy's infantry advanced across the valley leading from Chataldja to obtain a footing under the advanced works, which, reading from the Marmora to the Black Sea, are called Hamidiyeh, Mahmudiyeh, Nakashkeuy Kurd Dere, and Gazi Bajir.

During the last few days the Bulgarians had been occupied in placing their artillery in advantageous positions along the whole front of the Turkish lines. Their efforts to establish themselves on the high ground overlooking Buyuk Chekmedche were rendered futile by the concentrated fire of the Turkish warships, which are said to have completely destroyed one battery. Therefore, they were obliged to place their batteries in emplacements at the foot of the hills in front of the Turkish advanced works, in order to cover the advance of their infantry across the open ground which leads up to these positions.

Throughout the morning the roar of the artillery was so severe that it sounded like thunder. When I arrived at the high ground at the top of Lake Buyuk Chekmedche I saw before me one of the most magnificent spectacles that war provides. I overlooked the whole field of battle, and could follow every movement of both armies. On my left lay the Lake of Buyuk Chekmedche, and out at sea two Turkish warships were concentrating a furious bombardment from

all their guns on the Bulgarian positions on the hills on the farther side of the lake.

Huge columns of smoke and flame arose wherever a big shell from one of the naval guns burst, and speedily every village and farm in this quarter was in flames.

The Bulgarian artillery at the foot of the hills, protected from the fire of the warships, concentrated on the Turkish advanced works, which were completely enveloped in smoke from the bursting shrapnel. The guns were fired in salvoes to keep down the fire of the Turkish guns, which however maintained a desultory reply throughout the day.

The Turks are very careless in the manner in which they place their men. The whole plain below me was covered with camps placed in close proximity to the advanced works, so that the Bulgarians could shell all the reserves, the tents, and the long line of pack animals taking food and ammunition to the front. They did not fail to take advantage of this, and at times neglected the works and concentrated their fire on the camps, but the range was too great and but little damage was inflicted.

This was the game the Bulgarians played so successfully at the battle of Lule Burgas, namely, to demoralise the Turkish reserves by pounding them with shrapnel. As a consequence when they delivered their assault on the front lines, these reserves were in no condition to advance.

The front of this great artillery duel extended from the northern shore of Lake Buyuk Chekmedche until it was lost in the distance as far as the eye could reach towards the Black Sea. There must have been from 500 to 600 guns in action, and the little white puffs of shrapnel burst so continuously, that at times it was almost impossible to tell which were the Bulgarian and which the Turkish shells, and the valley became so choked with smoke that a mist seemed to be rising from the ground.

Then the guns would stop for a few minutes to allow the smoke to clear, so that the gunners could obtain a fresh view of their objective. At times the whole Turkish line was completely enveloped by bursting shells, and the infantry in the advanced works and entrenchments could not show their heads for a moment above cover; but the casualties were extremely small.

At two o'clock the bombardment became more furious than ever, and for some time the Bulgarian artillery left the camps alone, and concentrated every gun on the advanced works in a manner which seemed to be the prelude to an infantry assault. Heavy rifle fire broke out at several points, but during the afternoon the attack was not pressed home, and the Turks remained in possession of all their positions.

The bombardment continued almost without cessation until darkness fell, and then gradually ceased.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, it being quite evident that no decisive move would be made that day, and as the light was extremely bad for seeing, we decided to ride back to the small farm where we had left our baggage and to pass the night there. I hoped that, as soon as we took the road to Buyuk Chekmedche, our friends the gendarmes would leave us, but the sergeant declared his orders were personally to conduct us to Buyuk Chekmedche, and therefore he would ride with us the whole way. I do not believe these were his orders and his main reason, I am sure, for accompanying us was the hope of obtaining further backsheesh.

It took us two hours to ride back to the farm, and on the road I had a long consultation with Bryant as to our future plans. I was determined in no circumstances to leave the front until the result of the fighting at Chataldja was definitely known, and I told Bryant he must arrange with the gendarmes to pass the night with us at the farm and to

take us out to the front again on the following morning in return for a further payment. It was almost dark when we reached our camp and the sergeant was obliged to admit himself that it was too late to leave for Buyuk Chekmedche that evening. We therefore had the carts unpacked, our beds got ready, and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

The faithful Goupa had prepared an excellent dinner and we feasted our guardians and gave them whiskey to drink, until they became in an exceedingly amiable mood. Then Bryant reopened the negotiations and suggested that they should conduct us to the same spot at dawn, so that we might follow the operations. The poor sergeant was placed in a painful dilemma. He declared his instructions were most stringent and that if he disobeyed them, he might get into most serious trouble with the Headquarters Staff. On the other hand he was quite a sportsman, was anxious to see the fighting himself and was not at all averse to making a little money. I suggested to him that, if we were discovered by Headquarters on the lines, he should say we had passed through his patrol during the night and that he had no idea we were there. He said this scheme was not feasible, because we would be almost certain to be arrested by other gendarmes, as they were now everywhere, and, even if we went across country, it was extremely unlikely we could escape them. Finally he agreed to take us out at dawn, if we would promise him faithfully to return before nightfall to Kuyuk Chekmedche. Content with this arrangement we retired to rest.

We spent the night in what were evidently Byzantine ruins, which the peasants had roofed in to serve as a dwelling place. The ragged walls were blackened with age and smoke, and in the notches Goupa had stuck tallow candles, so that it looked like a sepulchre. I think originally that it must

have been a tomb ; anyhow, it was well in keeping with the surrounding atmosphere of death and corruption.

In the night I was awakened by warm breath upon my face, and by the light of the moon, which came streaming in through the open door, I could see the snarling fangs of a pariah dog, which had left feeding off the carcass of a dead horse in the tobacco plantations to enter our tomb in search of choicer prey, while outside, his companions were raising a melancholy chorus to the moon.

Donohoe had been taken ill on the previous evening and could not leave, so he remained in the farm all day, and I told him I would tell him all that passed up at the front. Just as we were starting, another gendarme arrived from Buyuk Chekmedche, and told the sergeant he was to take us back immediately to that village, as the major in command there had heard we were at the farm, and had issued orders for our immediate arrest. But my brother and myself, on hearing this news, immediately rode off in the semi-darkness, and the sergeant, having quieted the new arrival by telling him we would come to Kuyuk Chekmedche that evening, followed after us.

As we rode to the position from which we had viewed the fighting on the previous day, we did not hear any artillery fire and believed the attack of the Bulgarians had been suspended, but as we drew nearer the sound of guns reached us in a muffled roar. We had not heard it before owing to the strong wind which carried the sound away from us. When we reached the high ground overlooking the valley in front of the Turkish positions, it was very difficult to see anything or to make out the positions of the troops and batteries on either side, as they were almost completely hidden by a drizzling Scotch mist. It was a very weird sight, because you no longer saw the white puffs from the bursting shrapnel, but the red flashes of the ex-

plosions in the air, as they appear during night fighting.

We met several soldiers and one or two gendarmes, who were making for the rear. They gave us the most alarmist accounts of the situation. They said that some of the underlying works had been captured by the Bulgarians during the night and that the latter were now preparing for a general assault against the centre of the position, and were actually shelling Hademkeuy itself. Shortly afterwards an officer came up and told me what had happened. He said that at one o'clock that morning the Bulgarian infantry had delivered a desperate attack against some of the outlying works and had taken them by assault after three quarters of an hour's fighting.

When the mist cleared somewhat, it certainly looked as if this statement was true. The advanced works were apparently deserted by both sides, and the Bulgarians were concentrating their artillery fire on the Turkish camps and on Hademkeuy itself. This was the disaster of which the retiring soldiers had spoken. But they were somewhat premature in leaving the field. If the Bulgarians had really captured the advanced works in front of Hademkeuy, the position of the Turkish Army would have been extremely precarious, because the enemy would be established in the arc made by the receding circle of the hills, formed by the main line of defence, and if they once pierced the centre of the position they could enfilade both wings by their artillery fire, and very possibly cut off the retreat of the troops holding them. But none of these things happened, and the day was devoted to a heavy artillery fire, which, being at too great a range, inflicted but very little damage on the Turks, whose total casualties during the attack on the lines only amounted to seven hundred killed and wounded.

I have never yet been able to arrive at the truth about the

capture of these advanced works and their occupation by the Bulgarians on the night of November 17th and early morning of the eighteenth. I heard so many contradictory reports, that it is almost impossible to say exactly what did happen. I was assured by many Turkish officers that the advanced positions were actually carried at the point of the bayonet, but were abandoned by the enemy after a very short time. Others assured me that the advanced positions were never taken, but remained in the hands of the Turks until the Bulgarians finally retired and ceased their attack. My own opinion is that some of the advanced works were either captured, or abandoned by the Turks, but the Bulgarians found them untenable, and, after holding them for a few hours during the night of the seventeenth, retired at dawn.

Throughout Monday, November 18th, the Bulgarians continued to shell, not only the Turkish works, but also all the camps in the vicinity. From where we stood there seemed to be a continuous rain of shrapnel bursting over the troops of the 1st Corps, and we saw large numbers of men apparently abandon their positions and retire for safety to the rear. But as a matter of fact, as I learnt subsequently, this shrapnel fire inflicted but very little damage. The Bulgarians, having been unable to find any suitable artillery positions close to the lines, had to fire at too great a range, at from five thousand to six thousand yards, and in consequence the shells burst far too high seriously to inconvenience the Turkish troops exposed in the open.

It was a bitterly cold day, and, having watched the bombardment for several hours, at 2 p.m. my brother and I decided to return to the farm where we had left Donohoe and the baggage, as it was fairly evident from the absence of all movement that no decisive attack would be attempted that afternoon.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

At four o'clock we were back again at the farm, where I am happy to say we found Donohoe somewhat recovered and with no immediate symptoms of developing cholera, which we all feared so much. I was considerably mystified by the day's operations. The Bulgarians had expended an enormous amount of ammunition in an utterly futile bombardment and had pressed home no decisive infantry attack. It was obvious they could not continue this expenditure of shrapnel indefinitely such a long way from their base, and I felt sure that, if they intended to make a decisive and sustained effort to take the lines, it would be on the following day.

Try as we would, we could not induce the sergeant to allow us to remain at the farm another night. He insisted on our returning to Buyuk Chekmedche and, in spite of our protests, we had to pack up the wagon and take the road. I was determined to break away again on the following morning, to move right over to the right wing of the Turkish lines and to endeavour to get through from that side. At six o'clock we reached Buyuk Chekmedche and put up at the inn. Here we found one or two correspondents, who all had the same tale of woe to tell about having been arrested and turned back whenever they tried to reach the

front. That evening I was very busy writing despatches which had to leave Constantinople for Constanza by the boat the following afternoon.

At dawn on Tuesday we were astir and the carts were once more packed. Donohoe and my brother were to return to Constantinople, as the latter was now going back to England. They took the road in the motor-car we had hired, which had remained at Buyuk Chekmedche ever since our arrival there a week before. Goupa was to take charge of the wagon and the stores and to see them safely into the town. Bryant and I took the two freshest horses, abandoned everything except two days' supplies, and followed by two gendarmes who, I fancy, suspected some new move on our part, we ostensibly took the road for Constantinople also.

But after having ridden for two miles and having shaken off the gendarmes, we turned inland, and, avoiding all villages and all roads where we would be likely to find gendarmes stationed, we made for the extreme right of the line. All that day we rode through hilly country, having at times to make long detours and more than once becoming lost. But Bryant, who knows the country well, and who has a natural instinct for finding his way about, always managed to get on the track again. Knowing Turkish methods, I was inclined to think that, once we had arrived on the right of the line, no one would interfere with us, as it was more than probable that Nazim's order to expel all foreigners from the front had only been issued in the neighbourhood of Hademkeuy.

It was an extremely hot day, our horses were tired and our progress was not rapid, but we were comforted by the entire absence of any artillery fire. A few rounds were fired early in the morning, but it quickly died down again and everything remained still throughout the rest of the day. This showed that the Bulgarian attack had been

suspended and at least we were missing nothing for the time being. About four o'clock in the afternoon, having covered some thirty-five miles, we entered the hilly and wooded country which extends all the way to Derkos and which forms part of the Forest of Belgrade. It was impossible to pass through this and we were obliged to strike the Derkos road. We very soon came to a transport train, which was resting on the roadside, and also to a post of gendarmerie, but the latter took not the slightest notice of us. It was therefore evident that Nazim's order of expulsion was unknown to the officials on this side.

As it was now growing dark, we decided to pass the night at the first village we came to, and this turned out to be Arnautkeuy, pleasantly situated just off the high road and inhabited by Greeks. There was a large field hospital established in the village, and the Colonel in command of the hospital, having discovered our presence, sent for us. I showed him my pass, and he received us most graciously and at once sent for the head man of the village to find us a house in which we could pass the night. This Colonel was one of the most intelligent and enlightened Turks I met during the campaign. He had only been at the front a few days, as he was in Paris studying bacteriology when the war broke out, and was recalled by telegraph to join the army in the field. He had made a special study of cholera and told me many interesting details about the disease. He was an out and out Young Turk and had been obliged to live abroad for many years during the reign of Abdul Hamid.

The head man of the village found us a very comfortable house, which was kept by a Greek lady and her husband, who made us very comfortable for the night, and we were also able to procure some chickens and eggs. It was evident from the Colonel's attitude towards me that he knew

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

THE TRENCHES AT CHATALDJA.

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

WAITING FOR THE BULGARIANS AT CHATALDJA.

absolutely nothing of Nazim's order in regard to all foreigners, and he was only too anxious to assist me in every way in his power. He warned me that it would be extremely dangerous to move off the high roads, as the Bulgarian peasants and sympathisers in the villages had commenced to snipe Turkish patrols and to kill off any fugitives who were trying to make their way to Constantinople. Bryant and I were amazed on our ride across country at the number of stragglers we found hidden in the villages and amongst the hills. These men all gave a most gruesome description of the state of the army. They said that men were starving and that it would be impossible for the army to hold the line, if the Bulgarians only attacked in force. I determined to lie low in Arnautkeuy until the fighting actually started again, so as not to attract attention, and to risk the chance of being arrested by meddlesome gendarmes.

On Wednesday morning there was no firing at the front, so I remained in the village and gave the horses a good rest of which they were badly in need. About four o'clock in the afternoon we were surprised to hear a motor approaching, and, going out on the high road, I found my brother and Donohoe and a doctor from the British Red Cross in the Minerva car. They had left Constantinople that morning and could only get out of the town, all the entrances to which were stopped, by bearing the red cross on their arms. I told them that all was quiet at the front and they returned to Constantinople the same evening.

On the following morning, Thursday, November 21st, all was quiet, but, as I was tired of being shut up in Arnautkeuy, I decided to make my way once more to the front, to examine carefully the positions of the opposing armies and to find if the fighting was really over, or if the Bulgarians meditated any further attack on the Chataldja

lines. At eight o'clock Bryant and myself left the village to ride across country to endeavour to reach Yasoren, where we learnt we would find Mahmoud Mukhtar, the Commander of the 3rd Corps. As a matter of fact, he had been wounded whilst making a reckless reconnaissance on Tuesday morning and had been taken back by train to Constantinople, but I had not heard this news at the time.

Just outside the village we were surprised to find the bodies of no fewer than 130 Turkish soldiers who had died of cholera in the houses of Arnautkeuy during the previous 48 hours. They were all thrown into one big pit dug by the Greek villagers and covered with a thin layer of earth. On our way to the front we passed through several villages containing troops but no one inquired our business and we got through the permanent camps of the troops holding the advanced line of works, without any difficulty. There was no sign of any enemy in the immediate vicinity and not a shot was fired throughout the morning. I saw at once that a great change had come over the spirit of the Turkish Army, now that the Bulgarian attack on the lines had been successfully repulsed.

As I rode along the positions over the open plateau behind the forts it was difficult to believe that the army was not merely engaged in peace exercises. Bands were playing in the camps and the men one met on the road looked both cheerful and confident and had a very different demeanour from the sullen, depressed, careworn crowd who had survived the *débâcle* of Lule Burgas. The infantry were being drilled in open order exercises, close order ormations, bayonet charges, and rifle practice. Numerous targets had been set up and squads of men were endeavouring to hit improvised bullseyes, but generally with very poor success.

This spectacle of a large army, which had been fighting three days previously, being drilled and taught to shoot, with the enemy only a few miles away, is surely almost unique in the annals of war. I was amazed at all I saw. It was almost impossible to believe I was in the presence of the same army, which a fortnight before had been streaming back to Constantinople without officers, without discipline, the men starving and hopelessly demoralised. Certainly Nazim Pasha and his fellow workers deserve every credit for the remarkable transformation they worked in a short time.

This recovery shows clearly of what the Turkish Army is capable, if only it is properly handled and given anything like a chance. I have already mentioned the vast improvement in the *moral* of the Army, which followed the arrival of the picked battalions from Erzeroum, Trebizond, and Smyrna. These men had not suffered defeat or privation. They were being fairly well fed and kept clear of cholera as far as possible, and in consequence, having successfully resisted the Bulgarian attack and having suffered but very few casualties, they were spoiling for another brush with the enemy. Of the original army which was defeated at Lule Burgas, most of the weaklings were now under the soil and the old and useless reservists had been sent back to their homes. Thus there was now concentrated along the lines of Chataldja a powerful army, the organisation of which was improving every day. Trains were regularly bringing up food and medical stores from Constantinople, and already a reserve supply of five days' provisions had been collected at the front.

It was calculated that the Turks had at this time one hundred thousand men concentrated along this strong defensive position, and that reinforcements were arriving at the rate of two thousand a day. I also noticed a very great

improvement in the hospitals. The whole of the cholera patients had been cleared out of Hademkeuy and were now isolated in special camps, where the victims could obtain some attention. The cholera itself was showing pronounced signs of diminishing, which was partly due to the more sanitary arrangements now in vogue, but chiefly to the cold spell, which had lasted for three days. Nevertheless it was far from being at an end, and every day hundreds of fresh victims were borne away from the camps to the field hospitals or taken back by train to San Stefano, where the main cholera camp had been established. When the cholera was at its height, it claimed no fewer than three thousand victims per day, and it was calculated that, in all, the army of Thrace lost more than 20,000 men from this disease alone, in addition to large numbers from dysentery and enteric.

I was told by a medical officer that when the epidemic was at its worst, only 8 per cent. of those attacked ever recovered, but afterwards, when the victims received proper attention, a very much larger number were saved. But even now the medical authorities were greatly alarmed and feared an even worse outbreak in the future. The season was abnormal and the rains long overdue. If the wet spell came before the cold weather set in, they feared the cholera would spread with terrible rapidity. On the other hand, three days of snow and frost would wipe it out altogether, and these happily, arrived, so that as far as I know, cholera has now disappeared altogether from the Turkish camps.

I now learnt from my own observation that the Bulgarians had definitely retired from the immediate vicinity of the lines, and I was told they had abandoned and burnt the railway station at Chataldja. This retirement took the Turkish Army completely by surprise, as for three days past they had been expecting a decisive assault on the centre of the position between Hademkeuy and Yasoren. To meet

this attack they had brought up all their reserves, but even then were not confident of being able to hold the position, and arrangements were made for a general retirement, should the necessity arise. That they contemplated a defeat, is shown by the fact that another defensive position was being prepared in the immediate vicinity of Constantinople, where the Ottoman armies, animated by the sight of Stamboul with its many mosques and minarets in their rear, were to make one desperate stand in defence of Islam. Now without any apparent reason, before his attack had even been pressed home, the enemy had abandoned all his positions, withdrawn his artillery and had retired, occupying the high ground facing the right wing of the Turkish line, and was reported to be strongly entrenching himself.

What was the reason for this sudden abandonment of the offensive by the Bulgarians? No one has ever answered the question satisfactorily, and the Turks, who were absolutely amazed, could only reply "Inshallah" (God knows!). The conduct of the campaign after the battle of Lule Burgas cannot be said to reflect any great credit on Bulgarian generalship, and until we learn the official explanation of the indefinite attack on the lines of Chataldja and the sudden withdrawal, the Bulgarians must be blamed for having made a very false move. It seems fairly obvious that in their wildest dreams the Bulgarian General Staff never expected to gain such a decisive victory as Lule Burgas, and had never calculated on finding themselves within fifteen miles of Constantinople less than four weeks from the declaration of war. They probably calculated that the occupation of the capital would at once bring them into political conflict with Europe, and that in no circumstances would they be permitted by the Great Powers to remain in permanent possession of the city. Therefore they had made no arrangements for a rapid advance after Lule Burgas, as in all probability, after

defeating the Turkish Army of Thrace, their original plan was to take up a strong defence position in the neighbourhood of Lule Burgas and there cover the operations of the First Army which was besieging Adrianople. They never anticipated, and neither did anyone else for that matter, the complete break-up of the Turkish army and its retreat without order or discipline as far as the lines of Chataldja.

The Bulgarians doubtless expected to see the Army of Thrace rally at Chorlou and there make a stand, or even take the offensive again after reinforcements had reached it from Constantinople. They did not realise that there was no accumulation of food supplies nearer than Constantinople itself, and that a defeat anywhere in Thrace must cause the retirement of the Turkish Army to the vicinity of the capital itself. The Bulgarians, in fact, under-estimated their own successes, and when they discovered their error they could not take immediate advantage of the new situation, which offered them every chance of finishing the campaign with a thunderbolt, of capturing the whole of the Turkish Army, and also of taking the capital. Had they realised the decisive nature of their victory, or rather had they anticipated such a victory at the commencement of the war, they would surely have made every effort to pursue the routed army and to pass the lines of Chataldja, before it could be rallied or reinforced. They would surely have kept all their cavalry in hand and also have borrowed cavalry from their allies. They would surely have kept a couple of divisions of infantry in reserve and formed them into a flying column accompanied by a minimum of light transport, and have launched them against the mass of fugitives, thus keeping up the pursuit at all costs. But not a regiment of cavalry was in hand to follow on the heels of the Turks, as they swept in complete disorder across the plain between Lule Burgas

and Chorlou, and there was not a brigade of infantry in reserve to take the place of the non-existent cavalry.

I suppose the Bulgarian offensive had completely spent its force when the Turks left the battlefield on the morning of Thursday, October 31st. Their army had been moving steadily forward ever since the declaration of war on October 16th. In that short space of two weeks it had captured Kirk Kilisse, defeated the 1st Army Corps on October 24th and 25th, and had then, after two days' respite, entered on the three days' struggle with the whole of Abdullah's army. Evidently every available man had been drawn into the struggle, and on Thursday morning, when the Turks retreated in disorder, the Bulgarian infantry were completely exhausted. They must also have been short of ammunition after the tremendous expenditure throughout three whole days, and I know for certain that the men, although not actually starving like the Turks, were on very short rations.

In these circumstances Popoff could not follow up his victory. He had to reorganise his army, to collect his immense number of wounded, to reorganise his supply trains and to bring up fresh ammunition for his artillery. The Turks were therefore given eighteen days in which to reach Chataldja and to bring up reinforcements from Constantinople. Therefore the Bulgarian General Staff cannot be blamed for its failure to pursue the Army of Thrace after Lule Burgas.

On the other hand, it cannot escape criticism for its subsequent conduct of the campaign. Probably the Bulgarians learnt through the European Press for the first time of the complete state of disorganisation and demoralisation which prevailed amongst the fugitives who fled from Lule Burgas. For weeks the English, German and French papers were full of descriptions of the scenes on the retreat. Many

writers who were not on the spot, and who seem to have had but small idea of the distance to be traversed, or the immense difficulties to be overcome, or of the natural strength of the lines of Chataldja, assumed that it was only a question of two or three days before the Bulgarians would pass the lines and occupy Constantinople itself.

Within a week Europe had become, so to speak, perfectly acclimatised to the idea of having Czar Ferdinand's legions march in triumph through the streets of Byzantium, and already many anticipatory descriptions appeared in the Press of the dramatic scene, when, after an occupation of six hundred years, the Turk was to be finally driven from Europe and the Cross substituted for the Crescent on the dome of St. Sofia. It was certainly a dramatic moment, and the possibilities of the situation were enough to flatter the pride of any nation and any army. Who in their wildest dreams a month before expected to see the army of little Bulgaria doing what Russia has so often tried and failed? No wonder, then, the Bulgarian General Staff acted against its better judgment and allowed sentiment to triumph over sound strategy. They were drawn into a false move, which, although it has not up to the present altered the result of the campaign, has nevertheless rendered the peace negotiations extremely difficult to bring to a conclusion, because it restored the lost *moral* of the Turkish Army in a manner which nothing else could possibly have done.

King Ferdinand and his advisers seem to have argued thus. Here is a unique opportunity, which may never occur again and which is too good to be lost. There is nothing but a crowd of disorganised fugitives between us and Constantinople, according to the reports of the European Press. The Great Powers do not seem to care in the least if we occupy the capital, so why should we not enjoy the fruits of a truimph almost unique in the annals of war? Let us march

on Chataldja and see if we can take the lines and occupy the capital, temporarily at least. But then some misgivings seem to have entered into their minds. We have lost large numbers of men; the army is exhausted by its exertions; Chataldja is a very long way from our base, and we shall have extreme difficulty in feeding the army and in keeping the artillery supplied with ammunition; also the country is very difficult and offers every advantage to the defence, and it may be the Turks are not so demoralised as some of the critics seem to think. Above all, it would be fatal for us to meet with a decisive check, which would undo all the good results obtained from our victory at Lule Burgas. Therefore it behoves us to act with extreme caution and to run no risks. We have Adrianople on our hands and, until the fortress is taken, it will be impossible for the First Army to go to the assistance of the Second.

In these circumstances there were only two sound courses open which would have commended themselves to the great masters of war; either to abandon the project altogether, to take up a strong covering position and concentrate every available man and gun on Adrianople; or else to risk everything to obtain the great prize of the campaign, and to advance on the lines of Chataldja with every available man and every available gun. Neither course was adopted and a weak compromise was decided on instead; namely, to advance on Chataldja and to feel the strength of the lines by a cross between a reconnaissance in force and a half-hearted attack.

Such a plan contains the germ of failure, if not of actual disaster, from its conception. Popoff was ordered to try to shell the Turks out of the lines and to see if he could carry the positions without difficulty, but in no circumstances to risk a heavy loss in an assault which might fail. It is no use the Bulgarians now making out that the attack on

November 17th and 18th was merely intended as a reconnaissance in force to sound the strength of the lines and to test the state of demoralisation of the Turkish army. Such a plea will not bear examination. Every available gun was brought into action and a tremendous amount of ammunition, which could not easily be replaced, was expended without any effective results, and the advanced works were actually assaulted and some of them carried.

The official excuse of the Bulgarian Government to justify the retirement, namely, on account of the cholera at Hademkeuy, was very lame, because it was well known that the Bulgarians were already suffering themselves severely from this dread disease. This was ascertained without a shade of doubt from prisoners who were captured in front of the Chataldja lines. All these men described the state of the Bulgarian Army as being deplorable; the men as dying in hundreds from dysentery, cholera, and enteric, and the whole army almost on the verge of starvation. These Bulgarian prisoners could only point to their mouths and murmur in their own tongue "Food, food," when brought into the Turkish lines.

Therefore the Bulgarian attack can only be regarded as a misplaced forlorn hope, which came too late after Lule Burgas to meet with any chance of success; and in the circumstances, carried out as it was in a half-hearted manner, it should never have been attempted. It led, and could lead, to no definite result; it involved a very serious expenditure of ammunition and considerable loss of life, and it naturally discouraged the worn-out, overworked, and underfed Bulgarian soldiers. But, as has been said, the most serious result of the failure was the effect it had in restoring the *moral* of the Turkish army. The effect of the retirement was almost magical. The Turks at once passed from

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

TURKISH SOLDIERS SAVING THEIR WOUNDED CAPTAIN.

an almost excessive gloom to an almost excessive optimism, and, to hear the officers and soldiers talk, one would have thought they had just won a decisive and glorious victory, which fully atoned for their failure throughout the entire theatre of war.

CHAPTER XXII

THE WAR AGAINST THE CORRESPONDENTS

On this particular day, Thursday, November 21st, Bryant and I had ridden close to the rear of the forts of Chataldja and watched the army being drilled and trained to shoot, without anyone attempting to molest us, but we were not destined to escape without a strange adventure, which might have had the most serious results, but which, fortunately for ourselves, terminated in nothing worse than a fright.

About midday we sat down on a small hill and prepared to eat our frugal meal, which we carried in our haversacks. We had just dismounted and were eating when a bullet, which, to judge from the sound of the report, must have been fired at very close range, struck the ground with a thud quite close to us. We were both surprised by it, but I calmed Bryant's fears by telling him it must have been from a rifle let off by mistake, as this was a very frequent occurrence in the Turkish Army. I had hardly uttered these words, when another bullet struck the earth even closer and threw Bryant into a worse state of panic. I then suggested to him the possibility of our having taken up a position in rear of one of the numerous targets which had been set up for the men to practise, but on investigation we could see no sign of any target and no sign of any soldiers. We resumed our lunch, but five minutes later three bullets fired in rapid

succession all struck the little hill very close to us, far too close to be pleasant, in fact. I then suggested to Bryant that we should move elsewhere, an offer he was more than willing to accept.

We mounted our horses and were just riding away, when another bullet whistled by our heads and caused us to put spurs to our steeds. About a quarter of a mile to our right we saw two Turkish soldiers minding a flock of sheep and goats, which were grazing on the long grass behind the forts. We rode towards them and as we came up one of them was in the act of inserting a clip of cartridges in the magazine of his rifle and the other one was handling his weapon in a manner which did not serve to ease our troubled minds. I told Bryant to relate to them our unpleasant experience and to ask if they could throw any light on the matter. One of the soldiers then replied, "Oh yes, we saw the men who fired at you. It was not a mistake, they did it on purpose." "But why?" Bryant asked; "we have done them no harm and are friends of the Turks and have been with the Turkish Army ever since the commencement of the campaign." "Oh, have you not heard?" the soldier replied in the calmest manner, "A line of pickets has been established, by order of the General Staff, from Derkos on the Black Sea to Buyuk Chekmedche on the Sea of Marmora, with orders to shoot at any foreigners who attempt to cross the line formed by the pickets, unless accompanied by an officer or by a gendarme." This was pleasant news indeed, and Bryant said to me, "I think we had better return to Arnautkeuy at once."

Our friend the soldier then said, "We form part of that line of pickets, and have orders to shoot at you as well." Bryant asked them whether they intended to do so, and could only obtain a very evasive reply.

Meanwhile I took out my cigarette case and gave each of

them a cigarette, which they accepted and which was a good sign that they would not put their orders into immediate execution. Bryant then said to me, "I think we had better come to terms with them." I was entirely of his opinion and gave him *carte blanche* to arrange what he liked. A long and animated discussion then took place in Turkish, of which I did not understand a single word, but it finally ended in Bryant asking me for one silver Medjie (about four shillings). I was surprised at the smallness of the sum, but the soldiers were more than contented, and from their looks seemed to think we were a recklessly extravagant couple to have purchased our safety at such a price.

We were about to leave our two corrupt friends, when the spokesman of the party further alarmed us by remarking, "If you go down that valley which you rode up, those men who fired at you just now will be waiting on the hill and will shoot at you again." This was not encouraging. The soldier then said, "I will conduct you to the camps in the valley behind the lines and when you have passed the danger zone I will leave you." We accepted his suggestion with alacrity and were soon under way. However, even now I was feeling far from comfortable and thought the soldier might be leading us off quietly, so as to claim the honour of having shot us for himself. I told Bryant of my fears, but he replied, "He has accepted your bread and salt and will not go back on you."

Now from the first the soldier behaved in the most suspicious manner. As we marched along, he loaded his rifle and would keep behind us. This was too much for my nerves, and I told Bryant to call him up and to engage him in friendly and sustained conversation on the weather or on any subject which entered his head. This carried us to the foot of the valley, but then our escort suddenly left us and climbed the bank, and insisted on walking parallel with us in a very

commanding position from which he would be in an ideal situation to shoot. I was now thoroughly certain he meditated some treacherous attack, and got my Mauser pistol half out of its case, quite determined, if he shot at me, to shoot back at him and then to run away as fast as my horse could go. However, I was doing this man an injustice. He kept strictly to the terms of his contract, and had merely climbed up the side of the hill in order that the other pickets might see he was escorting us. When we reached the permanent camps behind the lines, he showed no disposition to leave us, and said he must take us in person to his general, who would doubtless decide what steps to take. There was no help for it, so we accepted the situation with the best possible grace. At the same time he begged us to say nothing about the bribe.

We found the general, a Circassian officer whose name I never discovered, outside a small house where he had his quarters. He did not receive us in a particularly friendly manner, and gruffly asked for my pass. This I was able to produce, together with Abdullah's letter, and his attitude changed at once. We then related to him what had passed, but he merely replied, "Yes, it is quite true, a line of pickets has been established with orders to shoot all foreigners at sight." This is the pleasant little way the Turks have of doing business. They give you no previous warning, but shoot you first and then explain their reasons afterwards.

This incident did not augur well for war correspondents in the future, and I began sincerely to wish that the rumours of an armistice, which had filled the air ever since the retirement of the Bulgarians, would materialise. The Circassian general was a very good fellow, and, when he heard I was returning to Constantinople, gave me a pass authorising me to come back to his headquarters, and promised to give

me an officer who would personally show me round the lines. Then we said good-bye and started on our return to Arnautkeuy.

Bryant's nerves had now quite given way and, whenever we met a soldier, he was convinced he meant to shoot at us. He stopped behind at every village and declared the water was better there than elsewhere, but later on I noticed his courage had revived and he was willing to ride to any part of the lines at any hour of the day or night. I then found he had been indulging freely in the native "rakki," a foul brandy which is on sale in all the villages throughout Thrace.

After what had happened I determined to return to Constantinople and to seek out the Censor, Major Vasfi, and to find out from him definitely what the position of correspondents really was, and if I would be allowed up to the front again in the event of the war being continued. I was now thoroughly weary of being continually arrested and hampered, and the affair of the afternoon had come as the final blow. On reaching Arnautkeuy, I was fortunate enough to find my brother, who had motored out for news, and, leaving Bryant instructions to follow with the horses and kit on the following day, I was soon being bumped over vile roads towards the Pera Palace Hotel.

On my return to Constantinople I found the air full of rumours of the armistice. It was reported that at any hour Nazim and Savoff would meet and discuss the conditions for a temporary cessation of hostilities, and would then proceed to a discussion of the conditions of peace themselves. I found most of my friends under orders to return home. My brother sailed on the Saturday after my return, and both Lionel James and Donohoe, exhausted by their tremendous exertions and disgusted by their treatment at the hands of the authorities, were packing up and only

waiting the definite news of the signing of the armistice before taking the first steamer home.

I found all the correspondents back in Constantinople. All had the same sad story to tell of having been arrested by gendarmes and placed on the road to Stamboul. This news and the departure of my friends made me doubly anxious to leave also and I telegraphed for permission, but received orders to "wait just a little longer." I soon grew weary of Constantinople and decided that, if I was obliged to remain in the country, I would prefer to be out in the open air with the army rather than pass my time in the enervating stuffy air of Pera with its foul smells and equally offensive rumours. I sought out the Press Censor, Major Vasfi, whom by the way I had never yet seen, but of whom I had heard many funny stories from my brother and from others who had been brought in contact with him. Therefore one morning, accompanied by the faithful Ismet, who was also anxious to return to the front, I waited upon him at his house.

Major Vasfi is a strange type, a Turk who has been educated in the school of Prussian discipline and who has taken everything German as his model. He is not a soldier, but a civilian who was formerly a member of the Turkish Parliament. On the outbreak of war he was given the honorary rank of Major, and was appointed as Press Censor and general factotum to all the correspondents. A more unfitting choice could surely not have been made. He possessed truly Prussian ideas of discipline, but on the other hand he was totally incapable of carrying his resolutions into effect and was also incapable of making up his mind.

When he was up at Chorlou with the correspondents and the guns of Lule Burgas were heard for the first time his one object was to lead everyone away from the battlefield instead of towards it. In reply to all protests he would say,

"But you cannot go there, they are fighting; we must ride towards Constantinople." Of course after this the Anglo-Saxon element would have nothing more to do with him, and dispersed on their own account. On the other hand, the German correspondents, educated in the same school of Prussian thought and of Prussian discipline as himself, would never leave his side, and the Frenchmen, although they heaped abuse on his devoted head, also remained with him at the front and during the retreat. Thus poor Vasfi, after Lule Burgas, arrived back in Constantinople, surrounded by a crowd of disgruntled Germans and Frenchmen and other stray nationalities, but without one single Englishman. In consequence he was peculiarly bitter against all Englishmen and especially against Donohoe, who, I fancy, had told him exactly what he thought of him on more than one occasion.

However, as he had never set eyes on me since the beginning of the campaign, Vasfi had nothing personal against me, and received both Ismet and myself in a most friendly manner in his house. We talked on general matters for some minutes, and then I broached the delicate subject of the censorship and of the future position of correspondents with the army. Then at once Vasfi's attitude changed. His face became pale with anger, he got up from his chair and walked about the room, heaping a torrent of abuse on all the English war correspondents, but on Donohoe in particular, and kept on saying, "Ah, if I could only meet him in the field. He has insulted me and disobeyed my orders, and all the English are the same. I took them up to the front, I kept them all together, and then, when we heard the guns, they all went away and I have not been able to collect them since. And what have you been doing? I have been looking everywhere for you and I have not seen you since the war started." Ismet and myself could hardly

restrain our laughter at the sight of this funny little fat man strutting up and down the room livid with indignation that anyone should have attempted to disobey him.

However, when he had calmed down, I pointed out that the authorities had not kept their word with the correspondents and had given them none of the promised facilities for the dispatch of news from the front. He was obliged to admit the truth of this, and confessed that the initial cause of all the trouble was the failure of the authorities to provide a French or English censor.

But it was not so much the censorship which riled him, as the feeling that he himself had been personally slighted and ignored, and in a very few minutes he had worked himself into a passion. He went on, "This evening I am going up to Hademkeuy to see Nazim. I am going to ask him for instructions. I shall advise him to keep all the war correspondents locked up in Constantinople and refuse them any further permission to come to the front. But if he says they are to be allowed up, then I shall urge him to make the most stringent regulations and only to allow those of them up who are friendly to Turkey." Then in his rage he gave the whole secret away by saying, "We find we do not obtain enough advantage out of the European Press. The majority of the papers work against us, therefore why should we give them facilities for seeing the war? We admit we broke faith with you in the first place by not having the promised facilities for the dispatch of messages from the front, and therefore I don't blame any correspondents who left of their own accord to send off news, because they were quite unable to carry on their legitimate work. But, if the war lasts, we are going to make fresh arrangements. In future we will only allow the correspondents of those papers with the army, who will work in the interests of Turkey. The correspondents of all those

papers which have been opposed to Turkey in the past or during the present war will be kept in Constantinople or else expelled from the Empire, and those who are officially allowed to accompany the army, will have to sign a document undertaking to remain until the war is over, and only news favourable to us, either political or military, will be allowed through."

I pointed out to the irate Vasfi how absurd such a system was, and how no paper of any repute would consent to keep representatives up at the front under such conditions. I also asked him whether we would have to send defeats as victories, to which he replied, "You will have to send exactly what the Headquarters think fit."

Thus it will be seen that the Turks were contemplating the organisation of a spoon-fed Press campaign in their own favour quite irrespective of the truth. Major Vasfi went so far as to declare that we had no right to report the battle of Lule Burgas as a defeat and that in future even a crushing disaster of this character would be suppressed. I left the gallant Major, feeling that from my point of view it would be much more satisfactory if the war came to an immediate conclusion.

On Monday, November 25th, I left Constantinople for the front for the last time. I had made up my mind to ride out to Arnautkeuy to pick up my horses and Bryant, and then on the following day to make no effort at further concealment but to ride boldly into Hademkeuy and see Nazim or his Chief of Staff and find out definitely what arrangements would be made for correspondents in the future. I expected to find Major Vasfi and Ismet out there, as they both told me they were leaving on the night of my interview to consult with the Headquarters Staff. With great difficulty I hired a motor to carry me as far as Hademkeuy. I had not employed either the chauffeur or the car before, but just

before starting I was warned by one of my German friends that the chauffeur was a scoundrel, who was in the habit of demanding money in advance, then taking his passengers half-way to their destination, and then saying the road was too bad to go any further and obliging them to return to Constantinople. I took a young Englishman named Morton with me, who belongs to Constantinople and who speaks the language perfectly. I was not much impressed by the look of the chauffeur or of his friend whom he brought with him as an assistant.

By this time all the gates leading from Stamboul were closed and no correspondents could get out by them, as they were immediately stopped by the posts of gendarmes. We had, therefore, to motor out by way of the Sweet Waters, which route the Turks, with their usual short-sightedness, had omitted to guard, as they were under the impression no motor could negotiate the almost impossible roads. However, some enterprising Germans had found a way through and explained the road I must take. At one point we had a fearful climb up an almost precipitous mountain side, but the car was a powerful one, and we reached the top and were soon on the main Derkos road. We thought our troubles were at an end, when suddenly an officer and four soldiers rushed into the middle of the road, holding up their hands to make us stop. We slowed down the car a trifle and as we came up to them Morton shouted out in Turkish, "Red Crescent," while at the same time I produced a badge with a large Crescent in red embroidered on it. The officer smiled, stepped back, and we were allowed to proceed.

Unfortunately we had started from Constantinople somewhat late and had taken longer on the road than we anticipated, and the light was failing before we reached Arnautkeuy, but there was still ample time to arrive before

it was too dark for the chauffeur to find his way over the very broken track on which we now entered. But now the warning of my German friend came true. The chauffeur started to create all sorts of difficulties and declared he could proceed no further and must return before night set in to Constantinople. I ordered him to go on, and, backing up my words with suggestive threats from my hunting crop, induced him to proceed a short distance further, when he deliberately drove the car into the worst part of the track. He then got out and said he must examine the road in advance before going any further. I told him my car had often been over it before and said I would show him the way, but he insisted on examining it for himself. In fact his one object was to dawdle about until he knew it would be too late to continue, and then to force me to return with him to Constantinople. He went on some distance, wasted a precious half hour and then returned saying it was quite impossible to proceed.

I realised from the first he intended some move of this sort and I had meanwhile dispatched Morton a mile back to a point where we had left some mule-wagons on their way to Constantinople. I told him to hire one of these at any price and to return with it to the motor. When Morton came back with the cart, it was almost dark and too dangerous either to reach Arnautkeuy or to return to Constantinople in the car. I had all my baggage taken out and placed in the mule-wagon, and also every scrap of food and drink, and then, without another word to either the chauffeur or his companion, we mounted the cart ourselves and were soon on the road to Arnautkeuy. I have never seen two villains more completely sold. They had not received a penny. They could not return to Constantinople, and were left stranded in a rut in a lonely district without food, without drink, and without any shelter for the night,

[*Photo "Daily Mirror"*

THE TURKS RETREATING FROM LULE BURGAS.

which was bitterly cold. They thus passed a miserable night and returned to Constantinople on the following morning, having learnt a lesson they will not forget for many a long day.

We had a three hours' ride over execrable roads before arriving at Arnautkeuy at nine that night. We went straight to the house I had occupied before, expecting to find supper awaiting us and my servants waiting to receive me. But, alas! this was not to be. I hammered some time on the door without obtaining any response, and it was fully five minutes before the old Greek lady crept downstairs and gazed gingerly at us through the keyhole, wondering who the intruders could be who disturbed her at this hour. We were then admitted and I asked where I would find Bryant and the dragoman. "They are upstairs, asleep," she replied in a strangely suspicious manner. No sooner had I entered the house than I was conscious of a strong smell of whiskey, cognac, and absinthe, which hung over the upper storey like the miasma from a bog. I entered the room which I had formerly occupied and there found Bryant asleep and snoring profoundly on my bed, and the other dragoman in a comatose position on the divan. Scattered in hopeless confusion about the room were the remains of a meal, empty bottles, and tumblers. I saw at once I was not expected that evening, and that my intrusion would be most unwelcome. However, I kicked both sleepers until they awoke, and their surprise at seeing me turn up at this hour was immense. They staggered to their feet, but experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining an upright position, and then it took them some time to collect their scattered thoughts. Then each in turn started abusing the other, and making mutual accusations of insobriety. I told them to cease endeavouring to saddle the other with his exact share of guilt, but to clear out of the room, open

all the windows, remove the *débris*, and prepare supper. Very shamefacedly they went about their task and at length we obtained some supper. This is a typical example of what one has to put up with in Turkey. If your back is turned for a single instant, your servants at once take advantage of the fact.

On the following morning I started for my last ride to the lines of Chataldja, accompanied by Bryant, and, leaving Morton in charge of the house and my belongings, promising to return that same evening. On the road I took the opportunity to admonish Bryant severely on his conduct. He promised not to offend again, but it was easy for us to see that his days of utility were numbered. His nerve had gone. He could not bear to approach a Turkish soldier, and expected every minute to be shot. He implored me not to attempt to pass through the lines again without first obtaining an officer or gendarme as an escort. I saw it was useless to attempt to go anywhere further with him, and agreed to pay a visit to the Circassian general at Tursunkeuy, who had promised to give us an officer to take us round the lines.

This officer once more received us in a most friendly way, but I could see that his manner was somewhat restrained. Then he told us he had received orders from headquarters not to allow any Europeans to pass through the lines, and that he must send them all back to Constantinople. I told him I wished to go to Hademkeuy to see Nazim myself, and asked him to allow me to do this. To this arrangement he consented.

Meanwhile a heavy rainstorm had come on, and we were delayed for a considerable time in the house. Here I had a long talk with the owner, a very enlightened Young Turk, who spoke French perfectly. He told me he had been exiled during the reign of Abdul Hamid, but had returned when the Young Turks came into power, expecting to see a

transformation worked in his country. But he found the Young Turks very little better than the old *régime*. He was extremely bitter against them for some of the political appointments they had made of men without ability and without experience, who had done much harm to the country. I rather gathered he was angry at not having received some appointment himself. But whatever his reason, he had had enough of political life, and had decided to retire and devote himself for the remainder of his days to farming and wine-growing and tobacco-raising. He had bought a large tract of land behind the lines of Chataldja, had bought vines at great expense, and had built himself the house in which we were now sitting.

He went on: "The first two years I did not do so very well, as numbers of my vines died from the blight, but last year I was more than compensated. Now look at this." He took me to the window, and I gazed on his land. The vines had been trampled down by the passage of armed men; his garden had been denuded of everything, and was now the site of a camp, and the young trees which he had planted had either been cut down or were now resounding to the blows of the soldiers' axes. Nevertheless, like a good patriot, he had placed, without any hope of compensation, everything he possessed at the disposal of the authorities, and had given up his best rooms to the General and his Staff. He laughed at the idea of the Bulgarians being able to force the lines, and said, "We are far too strong; there are now really three positions all fortified one behind the other. But it is impossible for the army to move from here. It has no organisation; the roads are non-existent, and they have no means of feeding the men, if they lead them out against the Bulgarians." It was easy to see the truth of his words.

The rain had now ceased, the soldier who was to act as our

escort was ready, and, after bidding farewell to the General, we took the road to Hademkeuy. The town looked very different now from what it had ten days before. All the cholera patients had been removed from the immediate vicinity to a large camp of white bell tents some two miles away. The dreadful square, which I had last seen covered with victims, was now packed with wagons and material of war. Trains were daily bringing up food supplies from Constantinople, which were stored in large depots near the station. The whole town was surrounded by the camps of the army, and thousands of soldiers were hurrying hither and thither, each playing his small but necessary *rôle* in this great drama of war. We rode through these camps to the railway station, and inquired where we would find the Minister of War. We were told he was living in a special train some two kilometres down the line towards Chataldja. We rode there and were molested by no one.

We first came upon the train assigned to the Military Attachés, who had now returned to the front from Constantinople. I met a Turkish officer, Moukbill Bey, who was attached to them, and who had formerly been Turkish Military Attaché in Paris. He invited me inside his carriage and explained some of the details of the fighting at Chataldja. Before being allowed to enter, I was sprinkled all over with a variety of disinfectants. In fact the whole town of Hademkeuy and all the camps in the neighbourhood sent up a strong aroma of disinfectants, as the authorities were making desperate efforts to stamp out the disease. I sent someone to Nazim's train to try to find Major Vasfi or Ismet Bey, but he returned with the news that neither could be found. As it was growing dark I decided to ride back to Arnautkeuy. Bryant and I had ridden some little distance and were passing through one of the camps, when we were completely surrounded by

soldiers and officers, and politely informed that a train was waiting for us in the station. Bryant asked them what they meant, but we could obtain no further information.

On our arrival at the station we were taken before the Commandant, who informed us we must leave immediately for Constantinople. I asked him at whose orders. He replied: "Nazim Pasha has just heard you are here, and has ordered you to be sent down to Constantinople on the first train." I pointed out to the Commandant that we could ride back, as we had our horses and had left all our belongings at Arnautkeuy. But our protests made no difference. We were told we must enter the train and leave at once. I then asked what was to become of our horses and the Commandant replied: "You can leave them here." But on this point I was adamant. I refused absolutely to leave my horses, unless I obtained a receipt in full, and an acknowledgment of the exact sums I had paid for them. This the Commandant declined to give, and matters were at a deadlock, when the station master, an Austrian, suggested that he might add an empty truck to the train, in which the horses might travel. This was done.

Then they tried to make us enter a third class carriage with a crowd of sick—cholera patients (for all I knew)—and wounded. This I absolutely refused to do, and said that nothing would induce me to enter the train, unless they gave me a first-class, thoroughly disinfected carriage to myself. This led to a further row, but in the end I gained my point, and Bryant and myself were allotted a very comfortable compartment. As a final straw, the conductor of the train came and said we had no tickets, and could not travel without them. I pointed out to him that we were being sent back against our wishes, as the guests of the Turkish Government, and therefore it was surely their duty to pay for us. But all my arguments were in

vain. The officials said the company had no connection with the military authorities, and had to collect all moneys from civilians for itself.

In the end I had to pay up, and buy two first-class tickets and two horse tickets. It took us nearly five hours to cover the odd twenty miles between Hademkeuy and Constantinople. As we passed through the country, which was now so familiar to us, I will confess I was not altogether sorry I had been arrested and was seated in a comfortable train, which every hour was bringing me nearer to a comfortable hotel, rather than be riding in the cold, chased by gendarmes, and shot at by sentries.

Thus ends my last excursion to the Turkish lines.

All that now remains to be told is the signing of the armistice, which has for six weeks put an end to the bloody and disastrous struggle with three of the Allies, Bulgaria, Servia, and Montenegro. On Sunday, November 24th, Edib Bey, a Staff Officer, was ordered to advance with a flag of truce and arrange for a meeting between Nazim Pasha and the Bulgarian Commander-in-Chief, or with the delegates appointed by him. Edib was led blindfolded to the town of Chataldja and there saw the general in command, and a meeting was arranged for the following day, Monday, November 25th.

The Turkish Headquarters Staff forgot to inform all the forts that a Staff Officer was leaving with a flag of truce, and when Edib was met some way outside the lines by a Bulgarian patrol, the latter were vigorously shelled with shrapnel, much to their amazement, since they had naturally imagined they would be safe under the white flag. The situation was becoming very awkward, when the mistake was discovered and the forts ceased fire.

At eleven a.m., Nazim Pasha, accompanied by two Staff

Officers, motored out as far as a damaged bridge over the river, where horses were awaiting him, and then rode into Chataldja, where he was received with full military honours. The meeting between him and General Savoff and the Bulgarian delegates was extremely cordial. Nothing was said about the war, and, after the customary formal courtesies, General Savoff said:

"Have you full powers to negotiate peace?"

Nazim Pasha replied: "I am awaiting full instructions from my Government."

General Savoff then said: "What day will you be ready to hold the first meeting?"

Nazim Pasha replied: "On Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday; any day will suit me."

The Bulgarians then said they were most anxious to commence the negotiations at once, and Wednesday was finally agreed upon.

The next point was to settle a suitable location for the conference. General Savoff suggested Silivri, a small town on the Sea of Marmora, but Nazim Pasha replied: "It is too far off, and would be inconvenient. I suggest that Chataldja would be the most suitable."

To this the Bulgarian delegates agreed, and the first meeting terminated.

Between Hademkeuy and Chataldja the railway line is intact, except for some slight damage to the bridge spanning the river. This was repaired on Tuesday by the Turkish engineers, so that on Wednesday morning, at eleven a.m., Nazim Pasha, accompanied by Reshid Pasha and Zia Pasha, Minister of the Erkaf or mosque properties, and by Ebro Effendi, the lawyer to the Sublime Porte, was able to travel in a saloon train to Chataldja, where they were joined by General Savoff, M. Daneff, and M. Tchaprachikoff, King Ferdinand's private secretary. The negotiations subsequently

took place inside the railway-car, for probably the first time in history.

All the delegates were from the first on the best terms with one another. On Wednesday, Nazim Pasha, as host, offered the Bulgarians tea. On Thursday a modest soldier's luncheon of three courses was ordered from Tokatlian's restaurant and taken out to Chataldja, and this was followed on Friday by a magnificent repast of more generous proportions.

The negotiations dragged on for nearly two weeks before the armistice was finally signed. During the whole of this period Constantinople remained in a continual state of unrest, hopes and fears alternating every hour of the day, But at length, on the evening of Wednesday, December 4th, the elusive armistice was signed just at a moment when Constantinople had begun to abandon all hopes of peace. Indeed, on December 4th the capital passed a very bad day, owing to the complete absence of any official news either confirming or denying the rumours of a rupture of the negotiations.

Up to a very late hour on that night it was fully believed in official and diplomatic circles that the delegates had failed to come to an agreement, and that hostilities would recommence the next morning. Those of the correspondents who had sold their horses and kit in the anticipation of a peaceful issue, were in despair, and spent the afternoon obtaining options on fresh animals and tents.

Pessimism reached its zenith after dinner, because we had been told that, if the armistice was signed at all, the hour would be two o'clock, in which case the news should have been known by five or six. Those of us who sat up later than usual, hoping against hope for a cessation of the bloodshed and a release from our labours, were rewarded at 11.30 p.m. by the issue of a semi-official

[*Photo S. Ashmead-Bartlett*

SOLDIERS AND REFUGEES ESCAPING FROM LULE BURGAS.

statement from the *Agence Ottomane*, that the armistice had been signed by Servia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro, but not by Greece.

We retired to rest with our minds relieved, but, on awakening next morning, our hopes again sank to zero, because none of the early editions of the papers were prepared to stake their reputations for habitual inaccuracy, by declaring the report issued on the previous evening to be true.

In the course of a short half-hour four persons, who were supposed to be in the know, assured me that no agreement had been signed, and that the negotiations had been definitely and finally broken off, as the Allies refused to sign without the acquiescence of the Greeks. I sent various messengers abroad to sound high officials and to visit the Sublime Porte, which was in its usual state of sublime ignorance as to what had occurred, was occurring, or would occur.

I then sent to some of the Embassies, fully believing that the dove of peace would first visit those interested arks with the glad tidings, but I found all of them hopelessly in the dark, devoid of any official news, and eagerly searching the rubbish heap of rumours for a scrap of fact. I then went myself to the War Office as a last resource, and saw the officer who sometimes distributes news. He had just arrived, and when I put the momentous question to him, he replied:

"I saw in the papers that the armistice had been signed, but I do not know if it is true, as I have not yet been upstairs to the official bureau of information."

We then talked for half an hour on the sins of the war correspondents and the omissions of the officials, and agreed that honours were about evenly divided, and that both sides were to blame, and, having arranged a *modus vivendi* for the

future, my friend went upstairs to seek the desired information. He returned in a few minutes with a telegram, which he said had been sent by Nazim Pasha on the previous evening to the acting Minister of War. He kindly translated the contents, which were as follows:

"Armistice signed this evening by Bulgaria, Servia, and Montenegro, and by our delegates. Greece alone refused to sign.

"The armistice will last until the end of the peace negotiations. Adrianople and Scutari to remain as they are at present, but are to receive one day's rations for the soldiers and civil population each day of the armistice.

"The line of demarcation between the armies at Chataldja is to be settled to-day.

"State of war with Greece to continue.

"Peace negotiations to be held at Chataldja."

Such were the contents of Nazim's telegram.

Right up to the very end the Turks continued to issue false statements. They circulated reports in Constantinople, which were believed by the populace, that all the beleaguered fortresses, such as Adrianople and Scutari, were to be revictualled day by day during the armistice. Therefore it came as a great shock of surprise to Constantinople to learn, some four weeks later, that Adrianople was receiving no supplies and might fall from starvation even whilst the Conference was sitting in London.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FUTURE OF THE TURKS

PEACE has not yet been signed between Turkey and the Balkan League, but even if the war should be continued in the future, it is certain that Turkey cannot possibly regain the immense stretch of territory she has lost. The question of the future possession of Adrianople still blocks the way to a peaceful issue of the negotiations. Up to the present, the Turks still refuse to cede the fortress to Bulgaria, and Reshid Pasha, the chief of the Delegates, has made the remarkable declaration that even the fall of the fortress through starvation or other causes will make no difference in the attitude of the Turks, who will demand the restoration of it from the hands of the Great Powers.

Of course this is mere word play, and, once Adrianople has fallen into the hands of the Allies, Turkey need look for no aid from Europe to restore it to her possession once again. Therefore the position is this. Either Turkey must yield Adrianople by treaty; or else she must be prepared to see it captured. If the war is renewed, it is obvious Adrianople must eventually succumb. It cannot hold out indefinitely, and already there is every reason to believe the civil population are suffering terribly from want of food, and from lack of fuel with which to keep themselves warm. To pass a winter in the Balkans without a fire is an experience which

few would care to undergo. Why then do the Turks refuse to accept the inevitable and to surrender the fortress, in which case the garrison would doubtless be allowed to march out with all the honours of war, whereas if the fortress is forced to surrender, or is taken by assault, they will naturally become prisoners ?

The only logical view to take of their stubborn refusal to accept the inevitable seems to be that a lingering hope survives in the minds of the military leaders, that the army, which has now been concentrating at Chataldja for nearly three months, may yet be able to bring about the relief of the beleaguered garrison. But, if the Turks really believed in the possibility of such a move, they would surely have broken off the negotiations long ago, and have marched against the Bulgarian covering army, because every day they delay helps to deplete the food supplies of the garrison, and to render the chances of success still more remote.

In reality nothing short of a miracle can enable Adrianople to be relieved by the army under Nazim Pasha. I do not know what the actual strength of that army is at the present time, but, with the reinforcements which have reached it from Asia, it cannot be far short of two hundred thousand men, and it may greatly exceed this number. On paper it forms a formidable host, which should be able to render a very good account of itself if properly led and handled. Without a doubt it is a very formidable army, but only so long as it remains behind the famous lines. There it is placed in an extremely strong position, and by this time the troops must be entrenched up to their necks, and would fight, if attacked, under conditions in which the Turks have almost invariably given a very good account of themselves. So long as they remain at Chataldja, they have very little to fear from the superiority of the Bulgarian artillery fire,

which, after their experiences at Kirk Kilisse and Lule Burgas, they dread more than any other arm.

Personally, I am of opinion that as long as they remain entrenched at Chataldja, they have absolutely nothing to fear from the Bulgarians, and I do not believe the latter would dare take the offensive against the Turks, as not only would every advantage rest with the defence, but the attacking army would also be inferior in numbers, although superior in artillery.

The superiority in numbers, which the Turks enjoy in front of Chataldja, will only last just so long as Adrianople holds out. According to the statements attributed to the Bulgarian generals, the latter have one hundred thousand men in front of the lines, consisting of the Second Army, which fought at Lule Burgas, while the First Army, of equal strength, is in front of Adrianople. In addition they have some thirty thousand young soldiers in reserve, and they can also call for aid from the Servians, as the latter have little on their hands. The Bulgarians also claim to have raised some twenty thousand men from Macedonia, but these cannot be very efficient. Thus, shortly after the fall of Adrianople, when the prisoners have been disposed of, the Bulgarians will have a field army at their disposal more than two hundred thousand strong of seasoned veterans, well trained, well organised, and well led.

Is there anything in Turkish military history in the past, or are there any data to be drawn from the present war, to lead us to believe the Turks are capable of meeting such an army in the field? Miracles of organisation cannot be worked in a few months, although large numbers of men may be concentrated at a given spot. Without organisation and skilful handling, the confusion only becomes the worse with every increase in numbers. But then, it may be asked, if the Turks are superior probably by one half, or even

double, the strength of the Bulgarian army actually in front of Chataldja, why should they not march out and defeat that army before the First Army besieging Adrianople can come to its assistance ?

Doubtless on paper such a scheme might seem feasible, but if put into practice it would be almost certain to fail. If the Turks take the offensive, all the advantages which they now hold are at once transferred to the Bulgarians, who, in turn, will find themselves entrenched in hill ground offering every advantage to the defence, especially to an army which is vastly superior in artillery. Both armies, if they endeavour to take the offensive, have the same difficulties to overcome, and both have the same advantages, if they remain on the defensive. They are facing one another in a narrow peninsula, very mountainous, which offers no room for the deployment of a large army in attack. Both would have to advance over a narrow front, which renders it impossible for a general to bring anything like an army of one hundred thousand men into action at the same time. Thus, any superiority in numbers which the Turks may possess would be entirely neutralised, because they would have to advance up a narrow funnel, so to speak, only to meet their enemy entrenched and waiting for them at the other end.

The Bulgarians very quickly found, during their abortive attempt on the lines on November 17th and 18th, how impossible it was to find suitable artillery positions, from which to support the attacks of their infantry, and it was doubtless this which caused their sudden abandonment of the attack. If the Turks take the offensive, they will find exactly the same difficulties, and will be overwhelmed by artillery fire.

Hitherto I have only spoken of the difficulties which the country presents for the manœuvring of large armies. But if the Turks were even successful and forced the Second

Army to retire nearer Adrianople, they would be no nearer the achievement of their objective, namely, the relief of Adrianople. In the first place, they must leave a very large force to hold the lines in case of a disaster such as Lule Burgas, which would cause the Field Army to retire precipitously. This would, of course, lessen the numbers which Nazim could take with him on an offensive movement towards the north. But, in reality, leaving a large garrison at Chataldja is somewhat beside the point, because it would be utterly impossible for any general to feed his whole army if he took all his men with him, and I do not believe he could possibly feed an army of even fifty thousand men at any distance from his base. The Turks could not feed the army of Thrace under Abdullah Pasha, or even keep it supplied with ammunition, when they were in control of the line of the railway, and when the season was far more favourable for the passage of wheeled transport, than it is now. But, if they decide to advance, they will no longer have the railway at their disposal, because the Bulgarians are certain to destroy it if the latter see any chance of suffering a reverse and being forced to retire. Therefore, it is obvious that for some weeks, even months, the Commander-in-Chief would have to rely on wheeled transport, with which to keep his army supplied. But, as I have already pointed out many times in this book, roads in Thrace are almost non-existent. In the summer they are mere tracks covered with ruts, which are turned into pools of mud and slime after any rain; but in winter, when they are covered with snow and frozen up, with the inequalities and holes partly hidden, they are infinitely more dangerous and difficult.

The Turks have no mule carts, and all their supplies and ammunition would have to be drawn in bullock-wagons. Now the pace of bullock transport under summer conditions is only, in favourable circumstances, one and a half miles

per hour, and in winter it would be even less than this. In the summer the bullocks were able to obtain sustenance, and this also applies to the horses of the cavalry and artillery, from the rich pastures of the grass lands of Thrace, and, therefore, the problem of feeding them presented but few difficulties. But in the winter, with the country frozen up or covered with snow, food will have to be carried, not only for the army, but for the immense pack of bullocks and horses, and this alone, apart from every other consideration, will prove an impossible task.

Apart from the difficulties of transport and supply, all the old strategical and tactical faults will at once reappear, if the army leaves the friendly shelter of the lines. It is quite impossible, if we are to draw a precedent from any other army, for Nazim to have created a thoroughly efficient General Staff capable of handling one hundred thousand men in the field, since the battle of Lule Burgas. A trained Staff can only be created after years of patient work, and it can only learn to handle an army after repeated practice under peace conditions. But it is fully in accordance with the Turkish character, as revealed by their actions in the present war, for them to believe that, because they are able to control the army scattered along the lines of Chataldja, they would be able to handle it with equal efficiency in the field.

At Chataldja the various positions are now connected up by telephone; the troops never shift their stations, and all the subordinate commanders are within touch of the Commander-in-Chief. But, once the army leaves the lines, there will be no field telegraph or field telephone, the Commanders of the various Army Corps will be out of touch with Headquarters, except by the obsolete system of orderlies and A.D.C.'s bearing written despatches, and we shall see once again the spectacle of three or four Army

Corps manœuvring as independent units without order or cohesion. When Abdullah's army was advancing towards the line, Adrianople–Kirk Kilisse, the troops could find some supplies, and the animals forage, from the villages which are freely scattered over its fertile plains, but now even this advantage will be gone, for the country is deserted and has been swept absolutely bare by the tide of war and the retreat of one army and the advance of another.

I think I have said enough to show how impossible it is for the Turks to relieve Adrianople and how that fortress is inevitably doomed.

Why, then, in the circumstances, does the Turkish Government refuse to surrender Adrianople? Is the cause sentiment, or simply the intense stupidity which refuses to acknowledge the facts of the situation? I do not think sentiment accounts for much amongst the Turks in this age, and I know there are a great many Turks who, even before I left Constantinople, realised that Adrianople was lost to them for ever. The Turkish Government is holding out, because they stand in wholesome dread of the army at Chataldja. Soldiers do not think like statesmen. The ignorant private cannot look far enough ahead to grasp the fact that his country may lose more in the end by refusing to give up a beleaguered fortress. Probably more than two-thirds of the Turkish Army, which is now occupying the lines, have never fired a shot during the war. They do not know what defeat and starvation mean, and, with a pride natural in any army, they do not relish the idea of returning to their homes to announce that all the European provinces of the Empire have been lost to the faith, and then to have to admit that they themselves never fired a shot.

The private soldier, and even many of the officers in subordinate positions, cannot see things in the same light as the Commander-in-Chief. So long as they are fed and

clothed, and have a rifle and ammunition, they do not understand why they are not led against the enemy. They do not realise the difficulties of the Commander-in-Chief, who must keep each one of them supplied with food, clothing, and ammunition. Thus all the arguments which appeal so strongly to the commander of an army, and to the Government which he serves, are entirely lost on the rank and file. Therefore the Turkish Government is faced with a problem which must command the sympathy of every impartial critic. How can they surrender Adrianople and at the same time keep the army quiet? The Turkish Army is within only fifteen miles of the capital. When it is demobilised, every man must be sent to his home from Stamboul, and, if the army feels that the honour of the country has been sacrificed, it is just as likely as not to revenge itself on the Government, to cause a fresh revolution, and to run amuck in the streets of Constantinople. The only solution, so far as the Turkish Government is concerned, would seem to be for Adrianople to fall from starvation, and for the Government to say to the army, "This is not our act, but the will of Allah."

Although Turkey has lost all her European possessions, and has suffered even more in loss of prestige in the present war, there are a good many of the more far-seeing Turks who are inclined to look upon the loss of territory as a blessing in disguise. From the military and strategical standpoint she has surely gained in strength. No patriotic man likes to see whole provinces, which were conquered by his ancestors and governed by their successors for six centuries, suddenly lopped off, more especially when the unpleasant surgical operation is performed by races his country has formerly ruled. But, now that the first bitterness of defeat has worn off, the more far-seeing Turks are seriously asking themselves, "What have we lost and

what have we gained?" "After all," they say, "we never looked upon European Turkey as forming part of sacred territories of Islam; we have always regarded them as captured provinces, in which the Christian populations have outnumbered the Moslem, and in consequence we have always governed them as such. They were captured for the faith by the warriors of Othman six hundred years ago, and now Allah wills that they shall pass once again into the hands of the infidel. Well, so be it; it is fate, and no action of ours can alter the inexorable decrees of fate."

Thus, when the war is brought to a conclusion, there will be none of that lasting rancour in the minds of the Turks, such as the French feel against the Germans for the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, and none of that unchanging determination to regain that which has been lost.

From the economic standpoint Turkey is well rid of the care of Macedonia. A precarious revenue of some five millions is drawn or forced from the unfortunate Christian population, but the country takes seven millions to administer, and the odd two millions have to be provided out of the already sorely-pressed Exchequer. In fact, Turkey has never gained either in wealth or in strength from ruling over Macedonia, Albania, and Thrace.

Now let us examine for a moment the strategical situation in which she is left, if the Allies' terms of peace are eventually accepted or forced upon her. Turkey has drawn no recruits for her army in the past either from Macedonia or Albania, and extremely few from the Mahommedan population of Thrace. Therefore, as almost all Thrace is to be left in her possession, her army will lose no valuable recruiting ground which will seriously deplete its numbers. On the other hand, the Turks have always been obliged to maintain large armies in Macedonia and in Albania to put down periodical insurrections, and to preserve peace amongst

the various nationalities and religions which make up that unhappy land.

Having to keep a great part of its forces always ready for war and dispersed throughout Macedonia and Albania, has ever been a source of weakness to the Empire. It has also been a great drain on its resources, and was largely responsible for the disasters of the present war. In future the whole of the army, which the Turks have been obliged to keep in Europe, will be available for the defence of Constantinople and Gallipoli, or else it can be employed in the Caucasus, the Armenian frontier, and in the Yemen. It will, in fact, be available for the services of the Empire proper, and will not be frittered away in Europe in useless attempts to quell insurrections among the bands in Albania and Macedonia.

One of the reasons which the Turks give for refusing to surrender Adrianople, is that it will leave them no frontier for the defence of Constantinople, and will also expose the province of Thrace to continual invasion. This plea will not bear examination. Adrianople is not the line of defence for Constantinople. If the Turks remained in possession of it, it could always be turned, isolated, and besieged exactly as has been its fate in the war. It would be a constant source of weakness to the Turks, because it would encourage them to keep a large army in Thrace, so as to go to the assistance of the fortress in case of need, and they would have to fight for the defence of Constantinople in a false position.

There is only one true line of defence for the capital, and that is the lines of Chataldja. That position, if permanent works were erected on it, could be rendered absolutely impregnable, and it could not be forced, assisted as the army would always be by the fleet, except by the slow process of a regular siege.

The Turks have left to them the one natural position essential to their remaining on the European shore of the Bosphorus, and it is their own fault if they do not insure the safety of the capital for all time by rendering that position impregnable. They will have left to them Thrace, up to the line of the Maritza, but excluding Adrianople. They can train their army there, if they wish to, and they can keep garrisons at important towns, but, if they are called upon to fight again, their only sound strategical plan is to retire at once behind the lines and there to await the onslaught of their foe, whoever he or they may be.

The question of the future possession of Constantinople has frequently brought the Great Powers to the verge of war. If the Turks accept the inevitable and are content to regard the lines of Chataldja as their strategic frontier, then that question should never arise again. They should be able to hold Constantinople for all time, and it would tax the strength of the greatest of the military Powers to force a passage through that almost impregnable position. Thus, from the point of view of the peace of Europe, the war has been a blessing in disguise.

It is too early to place on record all the lessons to be learned from the Balkan war. We must await fuller information from the victors, and from the defeated Turks, before we venture on a scientific analysis of the strategy of the two armies. But the war has proved, what has been proved so often in the past, namely, the strength of nations organised for the attainment of a definite ideal.

For a century the Turks have blundered on, utterly unprepared for war, trusting to the dissensions of the Powers and to Allah to save them from the danger that was to come. When the "little Balkan States" had struck their first blow, and only then, did Islam awake from her perennial slumber and prepare for war. At the eleventh

hour the Ottoman Government, unable to concentrate its regular army in time to meet the attack of the invaders, seized hold of all the old Redifs upon which it could lay hands, formed these harmless, untrained, peace-loving peasants into extemporary regiments without a proper quota of officers, or any previous organisation and training; improvised these mob regiments into brigades, out of which the Headquarters Staff, with its peculiar faculty for self-deception, formed phantom divisions and army corps.

Although fully aware that no effective stand could be made north of Chataldja, the Government dispatched the whole of this unwilling band of martyrs to do battle around Lule Burgas, merely because they wished to make a show of resistance near the frontier. They did not hesitate to sacrifice the lives of some eighty thousand soldiers, in order to postpone for a few weeks the inevitable disclosure of their unpreparedness for war. They rested secure in the delusion of numerical superiority. Was it not preposterous that puny Bulgaria and Servia, with their total population of some seven million souls, should dare to attack the great Turkish Empire, with its vast resources and its population of twenty-five millions? But the Turks had yet to learn that numbers are of no avail against organisation. The Turkish army was not even concentrated when the battle of Lule Burgas was fought. Napoleon's maxim that an army must be concentrated before battle was forgotten. Having no supplies, or not having troubled to bring up supplies, they sent forth their army without bread to fight in a wilderness. Three weeks after the initial disaster of Lule Burgas the regular army appeared, strongly entrenched behind the lines of Chataldja, but it was too late, for by then their European possessions had been lost.

The telegraph, the railway, and the aeroplane have made of war an affair of days, where it used to be an affair

of months. Armies can be concentrated with a speed undreamed of in bygone days. A decisive blow can be struck with almost lightning rapidity, and the fate of a nation decided in a few days. Nowadays a war is won in times of peace, and the army that is best organised at the moment of the declaration of hostilities, and that can be concentrated with the greatest rapidity, must be victorious. The war between Turkey and the Balkan Coalition began on October 16th. On the evening of October 31st the Turkish Army was routed and the fugitives were flying, without a semblance of order, back to Constantinople. In a campaign of two weeks the conquests of six centuries were lost. Comment would be superfluous.

The days when recruits could be trained in the course of a laborious and prolonged march toward the scene of hostilities have gone for ever. Yet we in England are told with all seriousness that our Territorial Forces can be trained after the outbreak of war, on the hypothesis that six months must elapse before they could reasonably be called upon to fight, and that in the meantime our striking force of one hundred and fifty thousand regulars would amply suffice for our immediate defence. The striking force of the victorious Bulgarians at the battles of Kirk Kilisse and Lule Burgas amounted to between one hundred and one hundred and fifty thousand men. They admit that, in the first three weeks of the war, there was a wastage from that army of some fifty thousand men from casualties on the battlefield or from disease. What would have been the ultimate fate of that army if Bulgaria, with her scanty population of four millions, had not, as the fruit of twenty years of patriotic endeavour, had at least another one hundred thousand trained men to take their place?

Nations, like individuals, have their obligations, and the Turks, having proved wanting, must now pay the just

penalty of their incapacity. In the course of the five centuries which they have spent in Europe, they have proved that they are incapable of governing their conquests. They have not attempted to initiate a sound economic system; they have not given their subjects the first postulate of progress, justice or education; they have built no roads, neither have they cultivated the land. Thrace, which might have been the granary of the empire, they have left a barren wilderness.

Nor is there any sentimental reason why the Turks should be left in possession of their European conquests, for, since the beginning of the war, practically the whole of the Ottoman population has migrated to Asia Minor, without the desire or the means to return.

The future of the Turk lies in Asia. Let him return to the land of his fathers and develop those matchless resources which constant wars and preoccupations in Europe have caused him to neglect. Let him subdue the Arabs of the Yemen and the wild hillmen of the Caucasus, and so consolidate his Empire that a new Turkey may arise which will command the respect of European civilisation, and give to those Anatolian peasants, decimated by the successive wars of the last century, some measure of that peace and security which is vital to their survival as a race.

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